

Solanum sisymbriifolium

A Habit x 1/2

B Whole flower x 1 1/2

C Fruit x 1/2

D Hairs x 40

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 – your membership number is on the address label of your mailings).

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

SECRETARIES OF PERMANENT WORKING COMMITTEES:

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

PUBLICATIONS: Mr Arthur O. Chater, Dept of Botany, British Museum (Nat. Hist.), LONDON SW7 5BD.

MEETINGS: Miss Joanna Martin, Calthorpe House, Calthorpe Street, BANBURY, Oxon OX16 8EX.
from 18.5.84 – 70 Castlegate, GRANTHAM, Lines.

RECORDS: Mr David J. McCosh, 13 Cottesmore Gardens, LONDON W8 5PR.

**AMENDMENTS TO LISTS OF COUNTY
RECORDERS AND OF REFEREES AND JUDGES
see page 7**

REGIONAL COMMITTEES 1983 - 1984

SCOTLAND

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Mr G.H. Ballantyne
Mr M.E. Braithwaite
Miss E.R.T. Conacher
Dr J.H. Dickson
Mrs C.W. Murray
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BSE Observer Mr D. McKean
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Mrs O.M. Stewart

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Mr G. Wynne
NCC Observer Mr R.G. woods
Rep've on BSBI Council:
Mr M. Porter

Contributions for inclusion in

BSBI NEWS 37

must reach the Editor before

3rd AUGUST, 1984.

AMBIGUITY IN BIOGEOGRAPHY: THE 'BRITISH' PROBLEM

It is commonly impossible to tell whether a writer, in writing of a British plant or animal, means to refer to Britain only, or to Britain and Ireland.

The term 'British Isles', whilst not in itself ambiguous, encourages the use of the adjective 'British' in an ambiguous manner, as there is no adjective meaning 'of the British Isles'. To avoid this confusion, the term 'British' should be restricted so as to refer to Britain only; where both the major islands of the group are intended, it is necessary to say 'British and Irish'. The failure of authors to make these distinctions is a frequent source of puzzlement and annoyance to Irish readers. To give a particularly objectionable example: in a note in a recent issue of a (British) zoological journal, under a caption 'Rare whale sighted in British waters', we read that this actually took place off the coast of County Clare. The problem is by no means new and, as long ago as 1906, R.L. Praeger, the distinguished Irish botanist, drew attention to just this difficulty in a short note in the *Irish Naturalist* 15:41.

Recently, the Society's Council has been concerned to find that 'British' used in this incorrect, inclusive sense, has crept insidiously into the Society's publications and documents (e.g. our Prospectus). This is doubly unfortunate, as it is not only discourtesy to our Irish members, but also, as a slipshod and imprecise expression, it should find no place in the output of a serious scientific society. The Council is anxious to reaffirm its strong commitment to the conjoint structure of the Society, which we are convinced is in the best possible interests of plants and botanists in these islands. In so doing, we urge members to take all possible opportunities to strengthen the link provided by the Society between the botanists of Britain and Ireland.

Having regard to the above, the Council resolved on the following actions at the meeting on 24 November 1983.

1. To request all officers and editors of the Society to be specially mindful of the need to avoid the ambiguous use of 'British'.
2. To provide a subtitle for general use with the name of the Society, to make as clear as is possible within a very concise format the conjoint character of the Society.
3. To invite the Irish Committee to produce a brochure suitable for use in Ireland.
4. To publish a note in the Society's 'News' drawing the attention of all members to the problem.

John F.M. Cannon
President

Daniel L. Kelly
Chairman, Irish Committee

Further Information

Following the A.G.M. at the Linnean Society in London on Saturday 19 May (see separate programme in Annual Report in this mailing), members are invited to visit the Dept of Botany at the Natural History Museum from 2.30pm onwards. Staff will explain aspects of their work and it will be possible to see the herbaria and botany library. At 4.30pm Mrs Joyce Pope of the Museum's Zoology department will give an illustrated lecture entitled 'Insects and Plants'. It is hoped that many members will take advantage of the opportunity to see "behind the scenes" in the Museum Botany Department.

The excursions on Sunday 20 May will start at 10.30am from the car park under the viaduct near Abbey Wood Station. There are frequent trains to and from Charing Cross, London Bridge and Waterloo. As the detailed itinerary is not available yet, several options exist for botanical exploration of Thamesmead, not usually accessible and comprising interesting ditches, ruined foundations etc, Woolwich Arsenal with contaminated ground or a group of ancient woodlands. Members are requested to assemble promptly and come equipped with stout or waterproof footwear and luncheon refreshments.

JOANNA MARTIN, Calthorpe House, Calthorpe St, BANBURY, OX16 8EX.
N.B. New address from 21.5.84. 70 Castlegate, GRANTHAM, Lincs.

HON. GEN. SEC'S NOTES

Your Membership Number

Puzzled enquiries have followed requests for members to quote their membership no. (e.g. see Page 2 ADMINISTRATION, enquiries to Hon. Treasurer). Here is the explanation: Your number is the 5-figure code by which you are identified on the Hon. Treasurer's BSBI membership computer list. Hence the request for you to quote this in correspondence about subscriptions or addresses. *You can find your number* on the address label on the envelope in which this mailing was enclosed – and on all your BSBI mailing envelopes.

Field Meeting Bookings

When field leaders reported on their meetings last year, on several occasions, booked members had failed to arrive; mostly without warning the leader, and in some cases where numbers had to be limited some advance bookings had been turned away but the participants on the day were then less than the permitted number. Although if cancellations are unavoidable at the last minute it may not be possible to contact the leader before assembly time, a note of apology to the leader would then be appreciated. **PLEASE** inform the leader if you are unable to go after booking.

A member who did get to his meeting was Dave Earl and allowed himself plenty of time to hitch-hike the long journey to Golspie, Sutherland, had unexpectedly good lifts and arrived 36 hours early!

To Honour Professor Clapham

A day symposium has been organised by the *New Phytologist Trust* and the University of Sheffield to honour the 80th birthday of Prof A.R. Clapham C.B.E., Ph.D., Litt.D., F.R.S. on May 19th 1984. Unfortunately this is also the date of the BSBI/AGM and Presidential Address in London. However, we shall be represented, as 4 of the speakers are members of BSBI including Max Walters, who as Vice-President will take our message of congratulations to Prof Clapham. For any members not able to get to London but possibly to Sheffield, *The Flora and Vegetation of Britain: Origins and Changes – the facts and their interpretation* will be in the Arts Tower, Lecture Theatre 4, University of Sheffield on Saturday 19th May 09.15 – 17.30.

Plant Import Regulations

In *BSBI News* 35 page 3, *Collecting Plants Abroad*, the address for MAFF was given as Cannon Street, London. I am grateful to John Southey for pointing out that the Unit has returned to:

M.A.F.F., Plant Health Administrative Unit, Great Westminster House, Horseferry Road, LONDON SW1 2AE.

For some years now the Conservation Committee, with the help of Sara Oldfield at Kew, has been working on a Code of conservation of plants for travellers abroad. It is now hoped that the finalised version will be published by the R.H.S. in April in *The Garden* as *A conservation reminder, part of Plant health legislation and the gardener* by Peter Q. Rose.

In *BSBI News* 35 page 4 the *Specimens in plastic bags* is supplementary to the instructions for posting selected specimens to our Panel of Referees September 1983. It is *not* intended as advice for collecting plants abroad.

Churchyard Conservation

Congratulations to the Northamptonshire Rural Community Council who have initiated a *Conservation Churchyard of the Year Award*.

This ideally counteracts the 'shave, mow and scrape' policies which have been promoted by the Best Kept Village competitions? Other Counties, please note and follow suit!

In Sussex the Best Kept Village was again won by Staplefield, and it is encouraging to hear that points were awarded by the judges for the measures taken to protect orchids in the churchyard.

Sesquicentenary

Congratulations to the Bootham School, York, Natural History Society which celebrated its sesquicentenary on 23rd February 1984, thus preceding the Botanical Society of London/Botanical Exchange Club/Botanical Society of the British Isles by 2 years. We shall be celebrating our 150th anniversary in 1986.

Donation to BSBI Archives

Thanks, to **Max Walters** who has presented to BSBI Archives an annotated copy of *List of British Plants* by G.C. Druce 1908. This copy is from the Library of the late **Maybud Campbell** and has inscriptions from Druce, Eric Drabble and library stamps and signature (1941) of A.J. Wilmott. Tucked inside was a letter from Joan Gibbons presenting this copy to Maybud in 1952.

In the News

Many members will have seen **Max Walters** in *Gardeners' World* as Director of the Cambridge University Botanic Garden; and in the current *Natural World* Max features on the *In My Garden* page, as a tribute to his work at the U.B.G. from which he has recently retired. Appropriately enough the RHS has awarded him its Victoria Medal of Honour (VMH). We send to him, and to Lorna – and the donkey – our good wishes.

Some familiar faces may also have been recognised on a recent Thames TV programme about the Palm House at Kew, when BSBI was asked to provide a rent-a-botanical-crowd. On arrival the instructions were “to look intelligent while Professor Bell talked on plants”! In the week of writing this, BSBI has had no less than 4 requests from different television companies for various assistance with material for programmes. As we are rather thinly spread and these calls usually come at very short notice, it is not always easy to comply.

The Summer issue of **Natural World** promises *The Black Poplar* by Edgar Milne-Redhead, and *Orchid Conservation and Protection* by Lynne Farrell; both subject of special interest to BSBI.

When contacted recently by the new **BBC Wildlife Magazine**, I was pleased to recognise the name of the Editor, **Rosamund Kidman Cox**, as the first winner of the Warburg Memorial Fund award in 1973. Rosamund acknowledges her gratitude and the lasting benefit of her botanical travels.

Tailpiece

Overheard among harassed secretaries and officers:

“Life is too short”; “time isn’t long enough”; “the deadline came up so soon”.

Mary Briggs

BSBI CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

At its last meeting, Duncan Donald retired as secretary of the Conservation Committee. A number of factors had led to his decision which was reluctantly accepted by the committee. Everyone thanked Duncan for the time and effort he expended as secretary.

In order to lighten the load of the secretary two appointments were made to cover the role. Lynne Farrell will be the focus of business for the meetings of the committee and deal with correspondence, receive information, requests for advice and the like, whereas Tom Cairns will be the Conservation Committee representative on other committees, notably the Wildlife Link committee.

The past few years have seen a growing responsibility for the B.S.B.I. in nature conservation, and the Conservation Committee is currently considering whether this continuing development is in the best interest of nature conservation and in the best interest of the society. Should we improve our effectiveness and commitment to this cause? or should we pass on the responsibility to other organisations?

Other recent business is the preparation of the Great Britain Nature Conservation Strategy by the Nature Conservancy Council (N.C.C.). The Conservation Committee is considering its response to the strategy at the request of the N.C.C.

If you wish to write to us concerning any matter of plant and wildlife conservation, please contact Lynne. We would be pleased to receive any correspondence.

M. WADE, Chairman, Conservation Committee, c/o Department of Human Sciences, Loughborough University, LOUGHBOROUGH, Leics LE11 3TU.

The two undermentioned, invited members, were omitted from the list of Conservation Committee which appeared in No. 35. Our apologies to:

C.D. BRICKELL (Roy. Hort. Soc.)

DR D.E.G. IRVINE (Brit. Phycological Soc.)

BSBI COUNTY RECORDERS

Supplement 2 to March 1982 List

(For Supplement 1 see *BSBI News* 34 page 5)

* New Recorder † Change of address ● Additional Recorder

- 14 E. SUSSEX * Mrs L.B. Burt, Boonsfield Farm, Playden, RYE
E. Sussex TN31 7QA.
- 39 STAFFS * Mrs A. Lee, 3 Rosliston Road, Stapenhill, BURTON-
ON-TRENT, Staffs DE15 9RJ.
- 50 DENBS * Mrs J.A. Green, Coed Duon, Tremeirchion, ST.
ASAPH, Clwyd.
- 98 MAIN ARGYLL * Mr B.H. Thompson, 'Senja', Kilmory Road, LOCH
GILPHEAD, Argyll.
- 106 E. ROSS Vacant
- 107 E. SUTHERLAND † Mr J.K. Butler, Seaside Cottage, THURSO
EAST, Caithness.

IRELAND

- H8 CO. LIMERICK * Mrs S. Reynolds M.Sc., 115 Weirview Drive,
STILLORGAN, Co. Dublin.
- H10 N. TIPPERARY * Mr G. Sharkey, 81 Jamestown Road, Finglas,
DUBLIN 11.
● Mr J. Shackleton, Beech Park, CLONSILLA, Co.
Dublin.
- H13 CO. CARLOW * Miss E. Nic Lughada, 499 Howth Road, Raheny
DUBLIN 5.
- H16 W. GALWAY * Dr E.N. Kirby, Connemara National Park, LETTER
FRACK, Co. Galway.
† Dr C. Roden, Dept of Botany, University College,
Galway
- H24 CO. LONGFORD * Mr H.N. McGough, 46 Strand Street, SKERRIES,
Co. Dublin.
- H25 CO. ROSCOMMON * Mr J. Early, The Walk, ROSCOMMON.
- H30 CO. CAVAN * Mr P. Reilly, 26 Nephin Road, DUBLIN 7.

BSBI PANEL OF REFEREES AND JUDGES

Supplement 1 to September 1983 List

Referees have been appointed for an additional genus:

ROSACEAE

Cotoneaster

- Mr G.M.S. Easy, 11 Landbeach Road,) fre., ml., mfr:
Milton, CAMBRIDGE CB4 4DA.) cn., petals erect or spreading:
Mr J.R. Palmer, 19 Water Mill Way,) height and growth habit:
SOUTH DARENTH, Kent DA4 9BB) evergreen or not.

(for Key to abbreviations, see *Panel of Referees and Judges, September 1983*).

THE GEARAGH – A RARE HABITAT IN CO. CORK

It is not often that BSBI members have an opportunity to botanise where few feet have explored before. As an introduction to the unique area to be visited this coming August, we are grateful to Lady Rosemary FitzGerald for this stimulating account of her own trip there.

The Gearagh is an area of outstanding botanical interest, until recently comparatively unknown. It lies near Macroom, in a long valley south of the Boggeragh mountains, where many streams and tributaries run into the R. Lee, forming a maze of braided channels intersecting narrow wooded alluvial islands. Liability to flooding, and the intractable nature of this terrain, which can only be traversed with great difficulty by man or his beasts, has, from time immemorial, kept the woodlands free from the usual pressures. Tansley (1939) considered it to be forest of a pure post-glacial type, a product of a hydrosere progressing from marsh to wet forest to climax woodland on an ungrazed alluvial plain. The type is unknown elsewhere in the British Isles, but is equivalent to the 'Auenwald' type known from the continent. The 9th International Plant Geography excursion visited it briefly in 1949 (Braun-Blanquet & Tüxen, 1952), but before their results were published a hydroelectric scheme was begun which involved clear-felling much of the forest, and then drowning in a reservoir. The Royal Irish Academy organised a rapid survey before the woodlands vanished, and a summary of this was published. (O'Reilly 1955).

The area was then considered a lost habitat, and remained obscure until recently. But in 1982/3 interest was stimulated by tentative exploration by the Forest & Wildlife Service, and by the outstanding achievement of a local boy, Tim Hickey, who won a national Young Scientist award for an ecological survey of the Gearagh. In August 1983 the Irish Biogeographical Society held a meeting there, with notable results.

1. In the West Gearagh, upstream of the reservoir, some of the ancient woodland appears intact. The fringes are ragged, penetrated by cattle, coppiced, in one place a stream-bed has been widened by bulldozer to make a 'road' for extracting cut wood. But in remoter parts the difference is extraordinary. The myriad stream channels meander under a completely closed canopy of *Quercus robur*, with attenuated *Corylus* and *Ilex* beneath. The damp air encourages luxuriant growths of epiphytes, adding to the shadows. Any sense of direction, or indeed of the 20th century, is rapidly lost. Often the only 'paths' are the channels themselves, and only newly fallen trees let in occasional light. Tim Hickey was a much-needed guide through the maze. Plant species on the islands included abundant *Osmunda* and *Euphorbia hiberna*, and carpets of *Allium ursinum* showed in late summer as peculiar leafless bundles of whitish bulbs half uncovered by the frequent floods. The woodlands inspire a mixture of Gothic awe and scientific excitement.

Two of the plant associations of these woodlands have been named in outline (Braun-Blanquet & Tüxen, 1952), including the Blechno-Quercetum, the Corylo-Fraxinetum and the Osmundo-Salicetum atrocineræe, but the very rare nature of this relic forest, and the rather brief visits of previous researchers, suggest that much more detailed work on the precise components of the various vegetation types, and on the biology of the wet woodlands, would be valuable. Dr James White, a specialist in Irish phytosociology, has said "I believe it is essential for interested

botanists to make a definite statement on the status of the woodland, something that has never been done, even before the hydroelectric scheme drowned so much of it" (White, pers. comm. 1983).

2. The reservoir, usually seen by botanists only as an ecological crime, in the hot summer of 1983 offered some compensation. Large areas (my estimate approx. 40 hectares) of mud were exposed, and produced classic growths of some mud colonising species of increasing rarity in the British Isles, and of very infrequent occurrence in Ireland at any time. Solid green swards proved to be *Limosella aquatica*, with 'undergrowth' of *Elatine hexandra*, its red fruits and greener leaves like a mosaic on the mud. The commoner *Litorella* was flowering freely in the intermediate zone, and the normal shore-line had rich growths of *Polygonum* species, in particular the beautiful *P. minus* with slender interrupted flower spikes and narrow silver-striped leaves. *Bidens tripartita* and *Rorippa palustris* were also abundant, and *Filaginella uliginosa* occurred in all zones. This was the first Irish record for the *Limosella* association found. It is attributable to the Cypero-Limoselletum (Oberd 1957) Korneck 1960, well known from the continent, though Dr White prefers to re-name the Gearagh association as a vicariant association. The shore-line vegetation belonged to the association Bidentiti-Polygonetum hydropiperis (Miljan 1933) Lohm in Tx. 1950, of which *Polygonum minus* is a characteristic species.

Here too the visual aspects were striking, as the drought had revealed the former structure of the woodland, the old channels now full of stranded pondweeds, the islands crowded with blackened stumps and roots. The day of the IBS visit was misty, so this boneyard of ancient forest relics was only enlivened by a few swans sailing the channels, and the green fuzz of *Limosella*. Wading for pondweeds was a ghostly experience, but rewarded by at least 5 species including *Potamogeton gramineus* and *P. praelongus*, both uncommon in Ireland.

Obviously, as a chance visitor to the IBS meeting, my knowledge of the Gearagh is superficial. But the place impressed me deeply, and it is again threatened by development. Discovering that a BSBI meeting at the Gearagh had been arranged for 18/19 August 1984, I was encouraged to attempt a brief summary of the literature to date, and to add a few observations which might be of interest to botanists intending to visit the area.

I am much indebted to Noel McGough, leader of the IBS meeting, to Dr James White (who has papers on the mud flora and on the woodlands, in preparation) and to Tim Hickey, for their kindness both at the meeting and in later correspondence.

REFERENCES

- BRAUN-BLANQUET, J & TÜXEN, R (1952) Irische Pflanzengesellschaften. *Veroff. geobot. Inst. Zürich* 25.
- HICKEY, T. (1983) unpublished. *The 'Gearagh'*.
- O'REILLY, H. (1955) Survey of the Gearagh, an area of wet woodland on the River Lee, near Macroom, Co. Cork. *Irish Naturalists Journal*, 11, 279-286.
- TANSLEY, A.C. (1939) *The British Isles and their Vegetation*, Cambridge.
- WHITE, J. & DOYLE, G. (1982) The Vegetation of Ireland, A Catalogue Raisonne. *Journal of Life Sciences, Royal Dublin Society*, 3, 289-368.
- Lady R. FITZGERALD, 40 Alfred Place, Kingsdown, BRISTOL BS2 8HD.

TARAXACUM PALUSTRE IN S.W. SCOTLAND

Until Dr John Richards produced his *Taraxacum* Flora of the British Isles, *Taraxacum palustre* was often recorded in Scotland, but it was practically always a mis-record. *T. faeroense* of the Section Spectabilia was often mistaken for it, as it also grows in marshy ground. The only old Scottish record was Molat Hill, Haddington, but so far no one knows where that hill is, so it cannot be refound.

Taraxacum palustre sensu strictu was first found in Kirkcudbrightshire in two places in 1974. One of the sites was visited the following year at the meeting after the A.G.M. at Dumfries, when it was said to be one of the largest sites in the country. The nearest place it grows (outside of Ireland) is in Anglesey. In the last two years I have found three other small sites, all within the area that our *Scilla verna* grows. The plant usually associated with it is *Schoenus nigricans*, and looking at the *Atlas of the British Flora*, these two grow in Anglesey. However there are no "dots" between there and VC 73, though both grow in Wigtownshire and Ayrshire. I feel sure there must be places in that area, with dampish short turf in basic rocky terrain, within 50 yards of the sea.

One of these new sites is also of note as the locality for *Taraxacum olgae*, a newly described species which is only known from this site. It grows on shell shingle by the shore, near the plants mentioned above, and should perhaps be looked for in similar conditions. It can be distinguished by its pink adpressed bordered bracts and its unusual-shaped spotted leaves (see drawing).

As one can see from the other drawings, the narrow unlobed leaves, which are coriaceous, and the distinct ovate, scarious-margined bracts of *T. palustre* distinguish it from *T. faeroense*. I hope people will look out for these dandelions in the West of Scotland, the Isle of Man and other places.

I am indebted to Chris Haworth for his helpful advice.

OLGA STEWART, 14 Church Hill, EDINBURGH EH10 4BQ.

SOLANACEAE – again

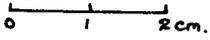
Solanum sisymbriifolium Lamark. Two specimens of this handsome 1m tall, prickly annual weed were found growing last year in a field of fodder beet near Bicester, Oxford, Oxon and caused considerable interest in the local press at the time. The plants, which were identified by the Weed Research Organisation, (WRO) Yarton, Oxford, belong to one of the more striking species in the genus with large, pure white flowers and reddish – yellow berries partially covered by the accrescent spiny calyx. A native of the southern states of Brazil it is said to be poisonous and to possess narcotic properties.

Recording and identification of introduced weeds is one part of the many important functions of the WRO, which is now, alas, along with certain other important botanical research institutions in Britain, under threat of closure because of the present government's expenditure cuts. The illustration (on our front cover) was made by Mrs Rosemary Wise, well-known to BSBI members for her artistic talents, from material collected by A. Chell of ADAS. The specimen is preserved in **herb OXF**.

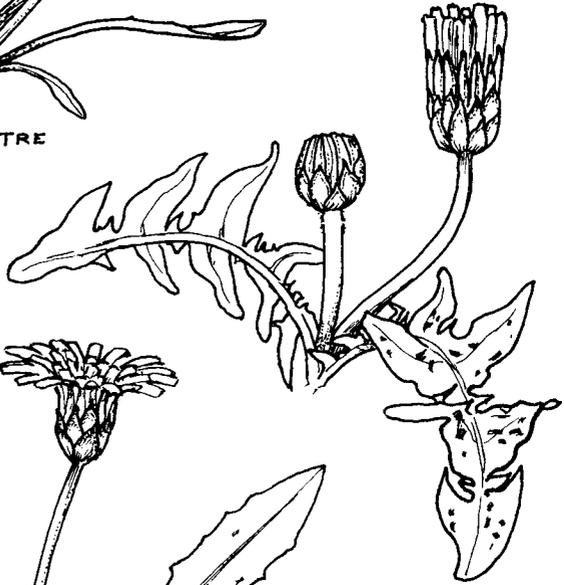
DR B.T. STYLES, Commonwealth Forestry Institute, OXFORD OX1 3RB.



TARAXACUM PALUSTRE

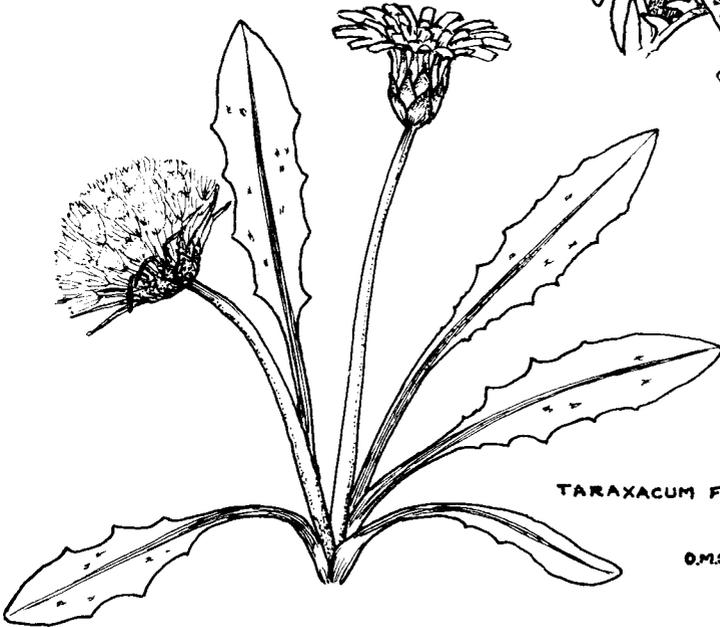


T. OLGAE



TARAXACUM FAEROENSE

O.M.S



Taraxacum palustre
Taraxacum faeroense

T. olgae

IVIES NATIVE AND INTRODUCED

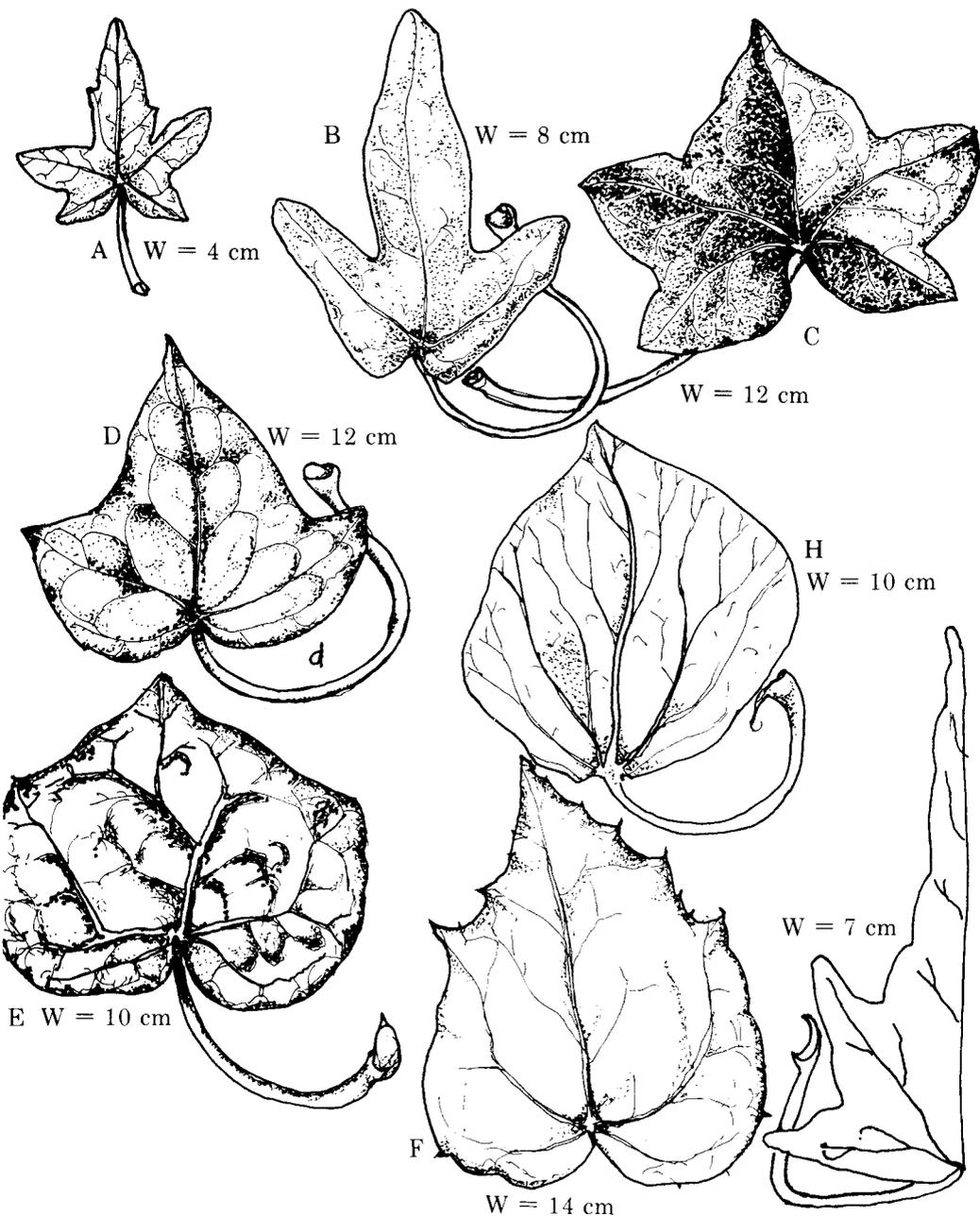
Since the B.S.B.I. Irish Ivy Survey, several interesting kinds have been discovered: Besides 'Irish' (*Hedera hibernica* 'Hibernica') and Common (*H. helix*), there is Atlantic ivy, (*H. hibernica*) and Colchis or Persian in several forms (*H. colchica*), Algerian the 'canariensis' of commerce (*H. algeriensis*) and soon to be a species – *H. affine algeriensis*.

Garden 'Irish' is very common except in Ireland! It is seen on garden boundary walls, in cemeteries and is naturalised widely in woods. Its place of origin would seem to be Isle of Wight and parts of SW England. Because it is sub-arboreal reaching that stage after the seedling leaves, it is excellent ground-cover, it is found from Orkney to Japan! It is easily distinguished by its uniformly-sized and shaped foliage which does not open flat thus catching the light on half of each leaf. It forms extensive sheets and produces adult (arboreal, fertile) foliage less than most ivies. It is dark rich green, mostly glossy. The leaves are often broader than tall, the lobes wide, short, and fairly even, the bases cordate and the fleshy-coloured petioles very long.

Common ivy is a most variable plant. But seldom reaches the leaf size of the Atlantic and tends to be less fleshy and waxy, more leathery, and having more anthocyanin, darkens more in cold. *H. helix* is a more wiry, hardier plant, in Britain it is found to the east in England and over most of Scotland. In N. Ireland, Wales and SW Scotland there are mixed populations, while in Eire only *H. hibernica* has so far been found. The only sure way to tell common from Atlantic ivy, apart from chromosomes, is by the scale-hairs. In *H. helix* the rays bristle about in all directions; this is clearly seen with indoor plants on the white furry new shoots. The rays of other lie parallel with the leaf-surface in the main, and are less obvious. Caution should be taken with wind-swept or handled samples, as the upstanding rays fall off, *H. helix* has a few flat rays which may adhere, to confuse things. Drought also affects hair development.

H. hibernica's hairs look fewer, being slightly adpressed, and may be tinted at the central boss from pale buff, to in Spanish samples, orange or brown. Atlantic ivy is more variable than at first suspected. In the Channel Isles is a form with totally cordate foliage, many seem to be able to bronze in winter, but mainly this species is a lighter, more olive-yellow green, glossier and faster-growing than the common, but one from Devon has tiny leaves and grew 3 inches (8 cm) in two years! Some forms turn red at the leaf-rim in winter.

The Colchis or Persian ivies vary. *H. colchis* of Koch is naturalised quite widely, as is the larger, matt-leaved, tooth-margined *dentata*, a geographical variant. Common *colchica*, hardly in commerce today, is very glossy, deep rich green and robust, the leaves may reach the size of a palm, but are often smaller. The surface rises between the main veins giving a quilted look. On damp warm days its umbelifer odour may be detected many yards off, even old herbarium specimens retain it. The variety *dentata* is similar, but less scented. The cream and grey-splashed cultivar is common in garden centres. The leaves are larger – 8-10 inches (20-25 cm) long; dull, thin, but leathery, flat surfaced with little prickles round the margins. Shoots root readily along the ground. It is less hardy than the type, and in severe cold, if climbing, its rolled up foliage look like pendant cigars.



A = *H. helix* $W = 4$ cm B = *H. hibernica* $W = 8$ cm C = *H. hibernica* $W = 12$ cm
 D = *H. algeriensis* $W = 12$ cm E = *H. colchica* $W = 10$ cm F = *H. colchica* var *dentata* $W = 14$ cm
 G = *H. colchica* lobed form $W = 7$ cm H = *H. aff. algeriensis* in its usually seen form – aborcal $W = 10$ cm

Lobed, thinner-leaved attenuate forms have been found, usually 3-lobed with cuneate bases and flatter surfaces, otherwise like *H. colchica*. They can be very rampant. All the colchis ivies have small, squat, reddish-orange scale-hairs with numerous rays united much of their length.

The Algerian ivy (*H. algeriensis*) commonly sold in its cream-splashed form as 'variegated Canary ivy', is native only to N. Africa. It is distinguished easily from all others by its large shield-shaped leaves, these are mostly glossy, 3-lobed, the side ones shorter and the bases cordate. It can become remarkably thick and leathery at the coast, but is usually thin. The petioles and new bark are ruby-red. It is not fully hardy, but can shoot from the ground in spring. The colour is emerald, but in some soils it may be almost black-green. The scale-hairs are close to those of *H. colchica* – the sap between celery and real turpentine, the twigs must be cut or bruised to smell it. The hairs show on very new leaves like red spider mites.

H. affine algeriensis has been found naturalised, and was planted in an old part of Bristol. Most colonies are sub-arboreal and light pea-green in leaf, this may catch your eye, but if struck and planted in rich compost it 'rejuveniles' and its relationship to *H. algeriensis* clearly shows. The reddish adpressed hairs may be seen with the naked eye on new growth. It is exceedingly hardy.

With Hugh McAllister's help, I will endeavour to identify material. *Please only living* shoots! If needed to be grown, it must not arrive wizzened. Ignore others' remarks about parcels of black squelsh. Ivies can loose all their leaves by rotting, and still grow, but if dried out, may be beyond recall. Do *not* send mature, arboreal or fertile sprays. All *Hederas* become alike with age, and at this stage, have few hairs and won't root. I need the most juvenile obtainable. This may mean – with climbing specimens – the lowest 12 inches (30 cm) from the ground to be 'typical'.

ALISON RUTHERFORD, 19 South King Street, HELENSBURGH, Dunbartonshire G84 PU7.

ANOTHER PUZZLE PLANT

One of the plants rather frequently sent in for identification by puzzled enquirers unable to find a matching illustration, is the peloric form of *Linaria vulgaris*, the Common Toadflax. Peloria is the condition of an irregular flower becoming regular through malformation of some flower parts, as Pamela Hadden, to whom we are indebted for the illustration, shows in her drawing.

- a) the normal form with single spur
- b) the usual peloric form regular flower, five spurs
- c) the occasional peloric form with three spurs but which still has the 'bunny-face' of the normal flower.

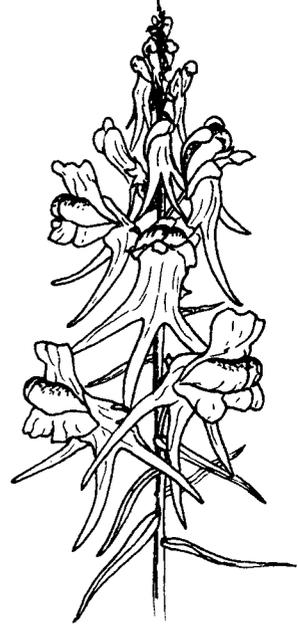
Drawn from transparencies photographed by Arthur Hoare, whom we thank for the loan of the slides.

Mary Briggs

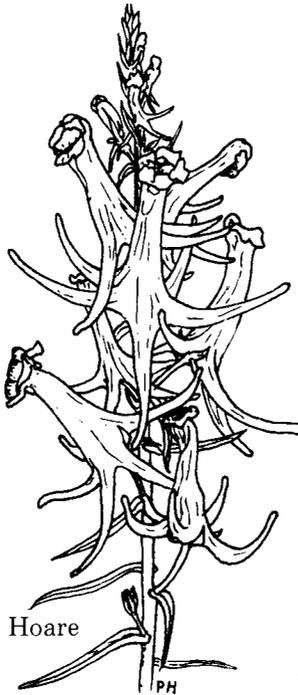
Common Toadflax
Linaria vulgaris

del Pamela Hadden © 1983

a) ordinary, single spurred plant



b) 3 spurred Peloric form



c) 5 spurred Peloric form

b) & c) from slides of Arthur Hoare

NOTICES

BSBI (official) Notices

BSBI COMMITTEE FOR SCOTLAND

THE SCOTTISH RECORDERS' CONFERENCE 1984, combined with Field Meetings, will be held at the Firbush Point Field Centre, Lock Tay on June 16-17, 1984. While preference will be given to Scottish Recorders, places may be available to other members. The cost will be about £12 per day. For further details and bookings apply to:

DR P MACPHERSON, 15 Lubnaig Road, Newlands, GLASGOW G43 2RY.

LADY'S SLIPPER ORCHID

The local custodians of this special rarity are again asking BSBI members to continue co-operating with those trying to save the native race of this plant from extinction by refraining for the present from visiting the site, **which is in any case on privately owned land.**

Photographs As announced previously, these are available as under:

Colour slide (35 mm)	at £1.00
Colour print (c 11 x 16 cm)	at £2.00
Black & White print (c 19 x 24 cm)	at £0.50

Requests with cash, postal order or cheque made out "Nature Conservancy Council", to me at this address please.

D.C. UNGLEY, NCC, Mater House, Hull Road, YORK YO1 3JW.

WELSH BULLETIN No. 39

Besides a report of its administrative affairs for the half-year to mid 1983, this issue contains the programmes of: AGM, Exhibition and field meetings for 1984, together with a directory of Welsh Vice-county Recorders.

Gwynn Ellis makes a plea for photographers who are hoarding large numbers of slides – seldom looked at – to make them available to a wider public to donate, or lend them to a botanical institution who could copy and preserve them. He also catalogues the recent bequests of journal runs to the BSBI Wales Library, and lists the diaries and notebooks of Tommie Warren Davis.

Dewi Jones contributes an article "A day among the hills of the Nantle Valley, and R.H. Roberts enumerates the annotations in J.E. Griffith's own copy of the Flora of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire. Accompanying this issue but bound separately is the latest volume of Welsh Plant Records.

BRITISH BRYOLOGICAL SOCIETY, future meetings

Spring field meeting, Brecon, Powys, 11-18 April, 1984.

Local secretary: Mr P.J. Port, Hollybush Cottage, Newton Lane, Kington, Hereford & Worcester.

(Full details in *B.S.B.I. Bulletin* 43.)

Summer field meeting, Wooler, Northumberland, 18-25 July, 1984.

Local secretary: Mr P.J. Lightowlers, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Bush Estate, Penicuik, Midlothian, EH26 0QB.

(Full details in *B.B.S. Bulletin* 43.)

Autumn paper-reading meeting, Birmingham University, 15-16 September, 1984.

Local secretary: Dr D.C. Lindsay, 20 Gibbs Hill Road, West Heath, Birmingham B31 3NZ.

(Full details in *B.B.S Bulletin* 43.)

Also small informal weekend meetings in various parts of the country. Further details from: DR M.E. NEWTON, Botany Dep't, University of Manchester, MANCHESTER M13 9PL.

THE SYSTEMATICS ASSOCIATION

announces an International Symposium on

INFRASPECIFIC CLASSIFICATION OF WILD AND CULTIVATED PLANTS

September 26-28, 1984

at the Department of Zoology, University of Oxford

The aim is to stimulate discussion of fundamental aspects of the subject. Contributors from agriculture, botany, forestry and horticulture have been invited to discuss: the nature of infraspecific variation; the possibilities for classification structures; practical, trade and legal constraints; and the difficulties of nomenclature. It is hoped to promote communication between the disciplines involved. Contributions invited for poster sessions. *Further details from:*

DR B.T. STYLES, Commonwealth Forestry Institute, South Parks Road, OXFORD OX1 3RB.

CROYDON PLANT RECORDS

Members who botanise in the southernmost counties of the U.K. will know of the Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society's Plant Recording Scheme the fifth and final report of which, by J.I. Byatt, has now been published. Like its four predecessors, all of which are available, it can be obtained from The President, W. Sowan, CNHSS, 96a Brighton Road, S. Croydon CR2 6AD at 50p plus postage.

SYSTEMATIC AND EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY, 1985

The 3rd Congress will be held on 4-10 July 1985 at the University of Sussex, near Brighton, England.

Congress Symposia now being organised are:

- Symbiosis in Evolution
- Conservation of Tropical Ecosystems
- Co-evolution in Ecosystems
- Angiosperm Origins and the Biological Consequences
- Molecular Biology and Evolutionary Theory
- Co-Evolution and Systematics
- Biochemical Innovation in Microbial Communities

There will also be Special Interest Symposia on other topics, as well as sessions for contributed papers, films and poster papers.

For further information write to:

BARRY COX, ICSEB Congress Office, 130 Queen's Road, BRIGHTON, Sussex BN1 3WE.

Dublin Naturalists' Field Club

Members visiting the republic of Ireland who may be staying in or passing through Dublin are welcomed to make contact with this Club, who are currently engaged on revision of the Flora of Co. Dublin. Throughout the year they hold lectures and field excursions, and anyone anxious to learn something of this interesting area should make contact with the Club by writing to its President.

PETER WYSE JACKSON, Dublin Naturalists' Field Club, Trinity College Botanic Gardens, Palmerston Park, DUBLIN 6.

BOTANY COURSE IN THE NORTH WEST HIGHLANDS

30th June – 7th July 1984

Suitable for the complete beginner or the more experienced botanist. The programme will concentrate on the study of flowering plants and ferns in relation to their environment and it is anticipated that some of Britain's rarer species will be encountered.

Miss R. O. SCOTT, B.A., Assistant Regional Officer for the NCC NW (Scotland) Region, and a BSBI member, who will be the Tutor, has worked in the NW Highlands for several years and has gained a thorough knowledge of the varied botanical features of the area.

Fee: £125 (includes tuition, board and residence)

Contact: Gerry Smith, Achnanellan Study Centre, Acharacle, Argyll, or phone (0905) 424947.

THE AVON FLORA PROJECT

A reception held at the City Museum, Bristol on 1.12.83 inaugurated the above project. The Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre, currently staffed by a team employed on a year-to-year basis under the Manpower Services Commission's Community Programme scheme is collecting information about the plants of Avon, to produce a Flora of the new County. The data collected will be stored on cards and in a microcomputer, thus enabling the many scattered records that are available to be sorted efficiently, checked regularly, integrated, updated and added to.

The Flora will exist in 3 forms:-

1) As a traditional Flora in book form, with distribution maps and additional notes. It will contain a comprehensive list of Angiospermae, Gymnospermae and Pteridophyta. Each species will be mapped on a 1 km sq basis, and there will be general information about the ecology of Avon.

2) The same information will exist on microfilm or microfiche.

3) The computer data-base, comprising record cards and computer files will be available for monitoring, revision and consultation by the public.

It is anticipated that the Flora will be published in about 5 years, funds permitting.

Individuals or societies who already have records, with either grid references or specified localities for v.c.s 6 or East 34, and any who would like to record for the Flora, are asked to contact the Records Centre (address below) for further information or help.

BRERC, Natural History Section, City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Queens Road, BRISTOL BS8 1RL.

OPEN DAYS – Suffolk TNC

15 April Combs Wood, Stowmarket, *Primula elatior*

29 April Framsdon, Boundary meadow, *Fritillaria meleagris*

13 May Groton Wood, Kersey Tye, coppiced lime wood, also oak/ash

3 June Rex Graham Reserve, Barton Mills; *Orchis militaris*, *Daphne mezereum*, *Botrychium*;
(cameras £1)

29 July Sprats, Water and Carlton Marshes, Oulton Broad; Broadland plants

Further information from:

Lt. Col. T.H. Pares, Suffolk Trust for Nature Conservation, County Hall, Ipswich.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Even with eight extra pages it has not been possible to fit in all the contributions sent in for this issue. Apologies to all those whose work has been held over, but will appear later.

When writing please give name in capital letters and give post code, as most main offices are now mechanised and short shrift is given to code-less addresses.

THE UNDERGROUND ORCHID (*Rhizanthella gardneri* Rogers) The world's most elusive plant?

At this year's Exhibition Meeting I showed slides of this rare Australian orchid which my wife and I were privileged to see during a year I spent as a Visiting Research Scientist with C.S.I.R.O. in Perth, Western Australia. Several members of the BSBI have since written expressing interest in knowing more about this extraordinary plant and the Hon. Gen. Sec. suggested that I should write a few notes for the Bulletin. So here goes!

Rhizanthella is one of only two subterranean orchid species known in the world. The other, *Cryptanthemis slateri* is native to New South Wales and Queensland, while *Rhizanthella* is known only from the south-west of Western Australia.

Rhizanthella was discovered totally by accident by a farmer who was clearing virgin bush on his land near Corrigin in 1928. Two further finds were made in similar agricultural districts by farmers ploughing virgin land the following month. The plant was found at only 2 other sites between 1928 and 1960. At all these sites the plant was eliminated by farming and in the following years all attempts to locate the plant were fruitless and it was thought to be extinct. Eventually a new population was discovered in May 1979 near Munglinup, far removed from all previous localities. It is now known from 5 populations, but until 1982, the total was less than 50 plants. In 1982, about 120 plants were found at Babikin, some 200 km east of Perth and it was these that we visited in May 1983 with the Western Australian Orchid Conservation Group. This excellent group of people from all walks of life was in many respects just like B.S.B.I. – the members were enthusiastic, friendly, dedicated and with a degree of eccentricity which made them interesting people! Above all, they were willing to work to find *Rhizanthella* and after 16 people had spent about 3 hours each gently scraping away the leaf litter and top few millimetres of soil from beneath shrubs of *Melaleuca uncinata*, we were rewarded with 2 flowering specimens of the Underground Orchid. These were the specimens I showed on slides at the Exhibition meeting.

Rhizanthella is found underground, usually within 2 feet or so from the decaying stumps of Broom Honeymyrtle (*Melaleuca uncinata*), and is thought to be totally mycorrhizal with that species, thereby deriving its nourishment. The plant has a branched, flesh-coloured rhizome system from which arise longer vertical shoots bearing the terminal flower heads. The flower heads or 50-100 very tiny flowers are surrounded by 6-12 large spreading pink bracts; it is these bracts which one first sees when the soil is scraped away. The flowers, arranged in spiral rows, are somewhat hidden by the bracts, but on exposure the bracts curl back to reveal them. The flowers are said to emit a faint formalin-like smell, but I could not detect this. Insects are thought to be attracted by this smell to the flowers, which they reach by entering cracks in the soil; but little is known about the biology of pollination at present. The plants flower in May and June (which is autumn in Western Australia), but the flower heads never appear above ground level, their highest portions being a few millimetres below the soil surface. However, the ground around them is usually cracked and this presumably allows access to the flowers as already indicated. Seed set appears to be low and the seeds apparently mature in November-December. The

fruits are succulent, according to the data sheet published by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, from which much of the information in this article is taken and acknowledged.

The Underground Orchid is in the I.U.C.N. Red Data Book Category: Rare, and is now totally protected at known sites. Paradoxically, it is most likely to be discovered when farmers clear virgin bush!

References:

- George, A.S. (1980) *Rhizanthella gardneri* – The Underground Orchid of Western Australia. Amer. Orchid Soc. Bull. **49**: 631-646.
- Rogers, R.S. (1928) A new genus of Australian orchid. J. Roy. Soc. West. Aust. **15**: 1-7.
- Rye, B.L., Hopper S.D. and K.W. Dixon (1982) Rare Western Australian Plant, 8 Underground Orchid.

TERRY WELLS, Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton HUNTINGDON, Cambs PE17 2LS.

Poisonous Dog's Mercury

Prof W.T. Stearn drew my attention to *Mercurialis perennis* (dog's mercury) poisoning: a case of mistaken identity in the B.M.J. of 24-31 December 1983. A schoolmaster and his wife were seriously ill after eating large quantities of washed and boiled *Mercurialis perennis*. They had gathered this from the banks of a stream in a North Wales forest, and wrongly identified it as *Veronica beccabunga*, Brooklime, from a popular flower book. A warning indeed for precise identification before eating; or, as Arthur Chater points out, it could be considered as a process of natural selection whereby the human race will become better taxonomists? *Veronica beccabunga* can be used as a spring tonic (and was included in a 1694 prescription for this, see *BSBI News* 27 page 4).

The drastic effects of eating *Mercurialis perennis* have also been long known. *Medical Botany*, by John Stephenson MD and James Morris Churchil! FLS, 1828 quotes *Philosophical Transactions* No. 203 1693 and tells the "sad tale of W. Mathews" whose wife gathered Dog's Mercury as a pot-herb, boiled then fried it with bacon. Vomitting and purging afflicted them all, and the 3 children were "taken to the fire" then to bed where one "slept from Thursday to Monday". But sadly two of them had sprunts – i.e. convulsions, and died. The parents survived, mother "being forced to get up to look after her little family concerns" although feeling very sick. The father woke from oversleeping with "his chin on fire", but with his "Hat full of water by him all day long (he) frequently dipt his chinn in it as he was at work".

Nicholas Culpeper in *Culpeper's complete herbal and English physician, 1826* said of *M. perennis* "There is not a more fatal plant, native of our country, than this species of mercury". With the increase in popularity today of "food from the countryside" it is well to remember that the potential danger is real.

Mary Briggs

BRATHAY EXPLORATION GROUP – an appeal

Since 1976 I have been a member of Brathay Exploration Group, based at Ambleside, Cumbria, and am now considered an 'old hand' as a result of surviving 6 expeditions to the Monach Isles, Shetland, Lochnagar, Hoy, Ecuador and Cyprus.

Brathay Hall Trust is an independent charitable trust set up in 1946 and now consists of 4 parts – the Hall, where widely-ranging courses on leadership and management take place, the Field Studies Centre, the Youth programme (particularly helping young offenders), and the Exploration Group (BEG).

In 1984 BEG are offering a choice of 18 expeditions ranging from 'Introduction to mountain expeditions' in the Lake District to detailed wildlife studies in Zimbabwe. The members are usually from 16-23 years old (but we do make exceptions) and the leaders are people like myself who are interested in youth work, the great outdoors, and have a particular skill to offer. We do need botanists! (There is no age-limit for leaders). If you are interested, please contact me or Christine Clephan, BEG, Brathay Hall, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 0HP. Telephone 0966-33042.

Just to whet your appetite, here is a sample of one such trip.

23 March 1983. 10 am. The group of 14 assemble at Heathrow and all safely negotiate customs with the exception of one leader who is searched twice and made to empty her rucksac (guess who? – it always happens!)

4 pm. Arrive at Larnaca, Cyprus. Leap off the 'plane and search for Mary Briggs (who just happens to be returning from her Cox and King's tour). Rapidly exchange detailed botanical information and ask about weather conditions.

10 pm. Settle down for the night on floor of St Barnabas' Church Hall, Limmasol, which proves to be on the main road and so not as peaceful as we hoped.

24 March. Send other leaders off to negotiate getting our supplies out of cargo customs (no use my going – they'd want to open every box then!) Main leader takes taxi to RAF Akrotiri to check RAF and British Army activity for next 2 weeks on Akamas peninsula – yes, we are to be based in the firing area, but no, there won't be any major attacks. Rest of group explore Limmasol including the bookshop and zoo, the latter consisting mainly of British wildlife and especially pheasants. Zoo keeper insists on having his photo taken with the bear.

All squash into mini-bus and eventually, after superb drive along south and west coasts arrive in the quiet, unspoilt village of Neohorio. (At least it was that way when we arrived). Unload gear outside church, at which the main Lent service is just taking place – get involved in local scene immediately and showered with rice. Start to organise group to walk in to base camp (3 miles up rough track). 2 leaders stay with rest of equipment and Christian, our Greek-speaker, gets to know the locals.

One hour later main leader returns having lost all the members! Other 2 leaders collapse into hysterics. Get lift for equipment from Army landrover (not allowed to carry civilians). Arrive at base camp under cover of darkness to discover we're in the middle of an Army exercise and no members still. Splendid start.

25 March, 5 am. Awoken by thunderflashes and man 'committing suicide' outside our tent. Take pictures to record event. Members have materialised at last and are being dragged out of tents by invading troops (who think we're 'the enemy'). Young ladies in nighties eventually persuade them we are not.

Surface after repelling the attack and explore the Akamas peninsular by walking the length of it in temperature of 80°F.

26 March. Rip my back. Spend 3 days confined to camp and am delighted when expedition carries on as efficiently without me.

27 March – 9 April. Studies made of the plants, birds, reptiles, butterflies and geology of the peninsula. Small groups sent out for periods of 3 days to cover more distant areas with greater ease. Writing-up back at camp continues in hot sun.

The main project is to produce a guide to the Akamas peninsula for the more adventurous tourist i.e. people like ourselves. This consists chiefly of annotated walks, like nature trails, with detailed species lists included as appendices, (it is hoped to study some of the more interesting species in depth in 1984).

10 April – Leaders hire car and drive off into the mountains, leaving the members to organise their own 3-day exploration of the rest of the country.

11 April – Meet most of the members in mountain resort. (Can't get away from them anywhere!)

Drive up to Mount Olympus highest peak at 6000 feet, have snowball fight, decide it's too cold and, within 2 hours, are back on the beach sunbathing.

12 April. Return to camp to find most members already back. Break camp and bivvy beneath the pines, lulled to sleep by the Cyprus Scops Owl and Nightjars and the call of the Green Toad, which is incredibly similar to a Nightjar's.

13 April. Put members on evening plane back to Heathrow. Leaders' night out on the town.

14 April. Early souvenir shopping, taxi to airport, just make plane. Arrive 4 pm in London on a wet, drizzly afternoon in Britain feeling deflated at leaving behind a beautiful country, with wonderful weather and friendly natives. Was it a dream?

LYNNE FARRELL (address on p. 2)

30 December 1983

ALIEN FLORA OF WALLS in the SOUTH WEST

The alien flora of walls, largely consisting of garden escapes, is very rich in Britain, yet to date it has scarcely received a fair mention in *BSBI News*. To redress the balance, I have gathered together here a selection of largely unpublished records made by J.R. Palmer; they are from Cornwall (Apr-May 1974), Scilly Isles (Apr-May 1971) and Guernsey (June 1971), except where otherwise stated. These are undoubtedly amongst the best localities, but many other v.c.'s can provide a remarkable variety of such rock-dwellers thriving only in a very dry, competition-free environment. Plants on walls are often wrongly considered to be "planted": try yourself to establish a plant on a wall before you cast doubts, nature is far more successful here than Man!

Aeonium arboreum: Walls of Abbey Gardens, Tresco, Scilly.

Cordyline australis: One largish seedling on top of a wall in Candie Road, St. Peter Port, Guernsey.

Euphorbia mellifera: Seedlings on walls near Tresco Abbey, Scilly (outside the Gardens). Photographed.

Lampranthus falciformis: Abundant on field wall St. Martins, Scilly. Photographed.

Myrsine africana: Roadside, Tresco (*det.* DMcC) and on field wall near Abbey Gardens, Scilly. Photographed.

Pittosporum tenuifolium, forma: Seedlings in Penzance town, Cornwall. On walls, open spaces and public places. These seedlings were originally considered to be *P. buchananii*, but the error was detected when a sample was grown on by JRP.

Rosmarinus officinalis: Several seedlings on a wall opposite W. end of Candie cemetery, Guernsey.

Saponaria ocymoides: Wall near Caledonia Nursery, Guernsey. *Det.* JEL.

Senecio cruentus: Abundant on walls and roadsides, Garrison Hill, High Town, Scilly.

Ditto: Frequent to abundant in hedge-bottoms, on face of high walls, etc. at St. Ives, Cornwall. July 1981.

Senecio glastifolius: Widespread weed on walls, paths, etc. inside Abbey Gardens, Tresco, Scilly. *Cf.* *BSBI News* 29, p. 12.

Teline monspessulana: On wall of La Porte hotel, St. Peter Port, Guernsey.

Teucrium fruticans: Wall of Candie Gardens, 10 feet above the ground, St. Peter Port, Guernsey.

Kolkwitzia amabilis: One seedling, 6 ins high, on sloping top of very old wall, Rochester, Kent. October 1981. Many ripe seeds were lying on the wall from nearby shrubs. Parent tree, *conf.* EJC.

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

EARLY CONSERVATION

The French writer George Sand, who was a knowledgeable naturalist, proclaimed her strong convictions not only through her copious journalism but through the characters in her novels, many of whom are enthusiastic botanists. Four pages in *La famille de Germandre* (set in central France near Moulins in 1808 but published in 1861 and with ideas belonging nearer to that date) are particularly interesting to present-day conservationists in lamenting the destruction of “natural” habitats by improvements in forestry and agriculture.

She describes how the Chevalier de Germandre has left his well-watered and well-wooded estate to nature as a “sanctuary”, and lists some of the plants to be found there in contrast to neighbouring areas from which they have disappeared. “It only needs a landowner short of money or a new purchaser lacking in taste for all this fine vegetation to disappear under the feller’s axe; and with the shade the rare plants go too”. She is also aware of the ecological implications, pointing out that without the felling “the idle flowers, the little birds hunting their food and the diligent insects would still be forming a good community” because “in transporting the dust of the stamens they are great agents of fertilisation and sow as much as they reap”. But alas the goat, the ox, the donkey (“which does not spare even the most bristly of thistles”) and the arable! “How beautiful and flower-decked all the earth would be if man and his flocks and herds did not exist!” And “. . . this cheeky graminaceous plant which invades everything, this triumphant *triticum*, mysterious product which under the pompous name of *wheat* denies all its humble ancestors and advances chasing away before it all its more plebeian sisters the plants of no utilitarian value to man!”

So far I have freely translated and condensed. Coming now to her “threatened plant” list (all but one are British species) I keep her French names, most of which (like so many of our English ones) are clearly made-up translations of the Latin, and add some suggested identifications. “In the damp woods *la balsamine impatiente* et *la circé parisienne* [which is, of course, what *lutetiana* means]; on the hillsides *le genêt sagitte* [which must be *Chamaespartium sagittale*], *le bupleuvre à feuilles en faux* [*Bupleurum falcatum*] et les *hélianthèmes à corolle dorée*, all of which the ploughing up of old pastures is daily driving away and tending to exterminate. Beside the stream huge *eupatoires* whose fine lilac umbrellas were enhanced by the blue and silver insects . . . and broad *liseron blanc* [*Calystegia sepium*] curling round the purple spikes of the *salicaire*. In the still ponds a few individuals of that family so poetically named *hydrocharis* [beauté des eaux].”

I hope no apology is needed for a soundly based argument’s being couched in such purple prose, considering that this was a novel and that George Sand’s aim was to arouse her readers’ feelings in favour of conservation

JOHN OUNSTED, Apple Tree Cottage, Woodgreen Common, Near For-
dingbridge, HANTS SP6 2BD.

Early Conservation in Ireland

In response to Mary Briggs's note on 'Early Conservation' (*BSBI News*, 35, p. 7), I draw attention to an example that predates by several decades the 'twinges of botanical conscience' that she quotes. This is from Killarney in Co. Kerry, a tourist resort since the 18th century. Large-scale felling of the native woodland around the Killarney Lakes took place in the time of the Napoleonic wars (followed by large-scale planting and some coppicing) (Radcliffe 1814, Weld 1807). The wood of Glena, beside Lough Leane, in the estate of the Earls of Kenmare, was felled about 1804. Weld (1807), writing of the felling of Glena, states that he was informed that 'the proprietor of the woods, unwilling to strip the landscape of every embellishment, has generously ordered that all the arbutus trees should remain untouched'. This conservation measure would appear to have been successful; the arbutus is certainly still there.

References

- Radcliff, T. (1814). *Report of the agriculture and livestock of the county of Kerry*. Dublin.
Weld, I. (1807). *Illustrations of the Scenery of Killarney and the surrounding country*. Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, London.

DANIEL L. KELLY, School of Botany, Trinity College, DUBLIN.

A PROPOSED RESURVEY OF THE IRISH RANUNCULACEAE

It is now more than twenty years since the publication of the "Atlas of the British Flora". Field work in connection with the original field survey was severely hampered in Ireland by a chronic lack of manpower. As a result, many of the maps in the Atlas show gaps where certain early-flowering species such as *Anemone nemorosa* and *Ranunculus ficaria* were unavoidably missed by recorders who did not become fully active until later in the season. The scarcity of locally-based recorders prevented the confirmation of many well-known literature records of many less accessible species (most notably *Thalictrum alpinum*), but many other maps also show a surprisingly high percentage of open circles. A further complication was that in the time available, certain taxonomically confusing but geographically interesting species could not be fully investigated and were, of necessity given aggregate status (e.g. *Thalictrum minus*).

Changing circumstances suggest that 1984 may be an opportune time to consider the geographical resurvey of at least certain sections of the Irish flora. The publication of *Flora Europaea* has advanced a taxonomy that serves to resolve many of the species-identification problems encountered by field botanists. Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that the status of certain species may have altered significantly in the recent past. Many of the Batrachian Ranunculi may be in decline as a result of drainage (*R. tripartitus*), infilling of quarries (*R. aquatilis*, *R. peltatus*) or pollution (*R. penicillatus*). A related matter of interest is the possibility that certain species are being ousted by other more aggressive species such as *Potamogeton pectinatus*. Precise well-localised records would provide an accurate base-line which may in time have significance in the areas of conservation, pollution control and waterway management.

Accordingly, the IRISH REGIONAL COMMITTEE proposes to operate a recording scheme to re-map the Irish members of the Ranunculaceae. This scheme will run for a two-year period. If well supported it is hoped to produce an Irish atlas of the family, combining distribution maps with notes on the taxonomy and habitat preferences of the different species. The I.R.C. is anxious to obtain data from as many sources as possible and would like to hear from any of our members who may be in a position to assist with the survey. Full details of the recording scheme are available from:

DECLAN DOOGUE, 12 Glasilawn Road, Glasnevin, DUBLIN 11, Irish Republic.

***PHALARIS PARADOXA* L. ESTABLISHED IN BRITAIN**

In *BSBI News* 30, p. 12, I expressed surprise at the persistence of *Phalaris paradoxa* as a weed in cornfields at Calne and Compton Bassett (N. Wilts).

K.M. Goodway write to me soon afterwards, enclosing an article by Elizabeth Petrie, published in *Big Farm Management*, August 1982, p. 16. He points out that botanists are lagging way behind the farming fraternity in their knowledge of the status and distribution of this species in Britain, where it is known as "a grass weed which is steadily creeping into winter cereal crops, (and) threatens to rival black-grass (*Alopercurus myosuroides*) as a major weed problem. ADAS is warning farmers that *Phalaris* is a highly competitive weed that can become a major problem if not kept in check. Further quotes from this interesting article follow: they will, I hope, encourage BSBI members to search out more permanent localities for this plant and report them to Adrian Grenfell. (Records of fleeting occurrences have permeated our literature for well over a century! –CTW2, p. 1185, gives a full description of this "casual").

"A new weed to the UK is *Phalaris paradoxa* which was first identified here in 1978 by ADAS. It has already become established in parts of Essex, Suffolk, Buckinghamshire and Glamorgan. In some fields, ADAS has recorded as many as 8,000 heads per square metre.

"*Phalaris paradoxa* does not have a common name but it is a Mediterranean grass belonging to the same family as canary grass. It is not known how it reached this country but it may have been introduced in contaminated seed imported from abroad, or as a contaminant of canary grass commonly used in the production of bird seed and for pheasant cover.

"At the seedling stage, *Phalaris* has been mistaken for blackgrass, but it can be distinguished by the characteristic blood red sap which oozes forth when the base of the stem is squeezed. In the later stages this 'Blood Grass' has been mistaken for Timothy. It stands well above the crop, often four to five feet tall, and displays a fat cigar-like head. The branches intercept the stem at the nodes and, of the three florets, only one is fertile bearing a tiny pinprick of a seed.

"Following the discovery of *Phalaris*, ADAS was quick to recognise it as a potential problem and instituted trials to find the best means of control. John Martindale of ADAS Cambridge says that *Phalaris* is a weed of wetland and, like barren brome, it is encouraged by minimal cultivations. The best answer is to plough, although it is not known exactly how long the buried seed will survive. Deep ploughing has greatly reduced the level of infestation in some fields".

R.M. Payne visited the Calne site in 1982 and saw it in great quantity in the cornfield – "all apparently the form *praemorsa*." He also reports seeing it in a similar site at Hockley (S. Essex), shown to him by John Skinner of the Southend Museum. Who can add to this story?

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

AUTUMN LADY'S TRESSES

A fairly common habitat for this species (*Spiranthes spiralis*) is a mown garden lawn. In this habitat the orchid can exist for years, as its small rosettes of leaves are untouched when a lawn mower passes over them. The mower removes the young inflorescences in July and August, and, although mowing prevents the plants from flowering and seeding, it probably results in increasing their vigour. If, for any reason, the lawn escapes mowing in July or August, the *Spiranthes* makes its presence known by its many obvious inflorescences.

This orchid in many cases will have been introduced on to lawns with turf taken from short base-rich grassland where the Lady's-tresses grows wild.

Gummerhayes (1951) states that *Spiranthes spiralis* is one of the earliest orchids to re-occupy pastures that have been formerly under the plough. From recent correspondence in 'Country Life', I have learned that this orchid has established itself on at least three lawns in Monmouth that had not been turfed but had been originally seeded. So it looks as if the early autumn air of Monmouth is rich in seed of Lady's-tresses! I am grateful to Mr K.W. Mieszkis for this information, and I would be interested to hear if any member knows of other sown lawns elsewhere containing *Spiranthes spiralis*.

Reference:

Summerhays, V.S., *Wild Orchids of Britain*, Collins, 1951.

E. MILNE-REDHEAD, Parkers, 43 Bear St, NAYLAND, Suffolk CO6 4HX.

STRANVAESIA DAVIDIANA Decne. – A FUTURE MEMBER OF THE BRITISH FLORA?

In 1981 I noticed a seedling of this Chinese evergreen rosaceous shrub in my garden, from a bush about twenty feet away, and began to wonder if a species now so widely planted out would become naturalised. The seedling survived 25°F of frost the following winter.

Stranvaesia davidiana is increasingly introduced into the wild, particularly by the Forestry Commission, and especially in Scotland. Sometimes large numbers are planted, for instance along the E. side of Varragill Forest in Skye, but I have not noticed seedlings in such places. The species has been reported in print from Millbuie Forest in the Black Isle, but Miss Duncan tells me that this refers in fact to a planted specimen. She also says that the tree in her garden at Arbroath doesn't seem to mature its fruit. This lack of mature fruit is not a problem further south, on large bushes anyway. Accordingly in 1981 a search was made in the New Ash Green area of W. Kent, where the shrub is planted on roadsides. At first seedlings were seen only around the bushes, but later, with experience, they were found up to hundreds of yards away. The pinkish tinge of the new leaves and of the old leaves as they go over is a give-away feature even in very small specimens. Ken Page informs me that he has seen seedlings in Surrey also, and it seems we are likely to come across this more frequently in the future as an escape.

J.R. PALMER, 19 Water Mill Way, S. Darenth, DARTFORD, Kent DA4 9BB.

ALIENS and ADVENTIVES

Adventive News 27

Compiled by Adrian L. Grenfell

MIXED BAG

Polygonum capitatum Hamilt. ex D. Don: ?In its second year, entrance to disused camp site, Woodside, Isle of Wight, Dr G.F.C. Hawkins.

Cassia obtusifolia L. (*C. tora* auct., non L.): A solitary, large, non-flowering plant in newly-established soft fruit farm treated only with farmyard manure, Elmore, Glos., Sept. 1983. A.L.G. & Mrs S.C. Holland. Hb. ALG. New to Br: accompanied by fine *Sorghum halepense*, *Digitaria sanguinalis* and *Setaria viridis*. *C. obtusifolia* (Sicklepod), a native of the West Indies, southern USA (naturalised further north) and C. and S. America, is very similar to, and has been much confused with *C. tora* L. from the Old World Tropics, from which it differs chiefly in having glands at the base of the lower pair of leaflets only (lower two pairs in *C. tora*). The suggested vector of introduction is via soya bean waste incorporated in cattle feed. A recent Danish record (URT, 1983: 3, 48) undoubtedly belongs here.

Cassinia fulvida Hook. fil.: Beside main road, Criarlarich, Perthshire, Aug. 1981. R.C. Stern. Conf. E.J.C. First British record. *C. fulvida* ('Golden Bush') from New Zealand, is one of a family of c.20 evergreen shrubs (*Compositae*, tribe *Inulae*) confined to the southern hemisphere: the specific epithet derives from the deep yellow indumentum on the undersides of its leaves. It bears rounded, 5-8 fld. corymbose heads of white flowers.

Elaeagnus angustifolia L.: Hedge bordering car park, Amroth, Carmarthenshire, Sep. 1978. Mrs A.M. Bell. Det. & comm. G. Ellis. **NMW**.

Helipterum manglesii (Lindl.) F.J. Muell. ex Benth. (*Rodanthe manglesii* Lindl.): Garden weed, Parc, nr Llyn Tegid, v.c. 48. H. Armfield, comm. G. Ellis. **NMW**. "Not intentionally planted - source unknown". Perhaps a contaminant of flower seed? *H. manglesii* is the well known pink-flowered composite cultivated for its everlasting flowers, a native of W. Australia.

Lavatera thuringiaca L.: Roadside hedge, nr Bittern, Southampton, Hants., Oct. 1983, where first found in 1982. R.C. Stern. Conf. E.J.C. "A few plants in rural surroundings. ?Infrequently cultivated in Br. (C. & S.E. Europe).

Lappula squarrosa (Retz.) Dumort.: "... on the limestone pavement cum grassland", Marianglas, Anglesey, Oct 1983. J. Osley (N. Wales Naturalists' Trust survey team) as *Myosotis* sp. Det. ALG, comm. R.H. Roberts. Occasionally reported as a contaminant of N. American grass seed mixtures, an impurity in N. American grain imports and in bird-seed. The latter here?

Phytolacca acinosa Roxb.: Car park, St Katherine's Dock, nr Tower Bridge (Middx). Mrs J.A. Green. Det. J.M. Mullin.

Allium sativum L.: Naturalised (1982) by the high-water line nr Life-boat Station, Port Dinllaen, Llyn Peninsula. Lady Rosemary FitzGerald, conf. and Hb. ALG. c. 20-30 plants presumably originating from a drift bulb. *A. sativum* (garlick) could well be overlooked for the flowering var. *typicum* Ascherson & Graebner of *A. vineale*. It differs in its flat (fistular) leaves, larger 3-6 cm (1-2 cm) bulbs with many white bulblets and few (many) flowers which often wither and abort in bud.

Bromus diandrus Roth.: Roadside verge, Risbury, Bury St. Edmunds, det. & Hb. ALG. Mrs E.M. Coe. A variable grass (Rip-gut Brome) frequently (and understandably) confused with *B. rigidus* which (usually) differs in its rather one-sided, denser panicle and shorter panicle branches. I (and others) often find separation difficult: *B. diandrus* is increasingly naturalised on verges and grassland. *B. rigidus* probably never more than a scarce casual of docks and rubbish dumps.

Centaurea solstitialis L.: "... in a converted copper with *Magnolia stellata*", Shotesham, nr. Norwich, comm. E.L. Swann, det. & Hb. ALG. The finder wondered if it could be *Ammobium alatum* which has a similar winged stem but differing basal lvs.

C. solstitialis, once a weed of cultivated flax, is now rarely found in Lucerne and otherwise a rare casual. It could well be confused with robust forms of *C. melitensis* from wool waste.

Campanula portenschlagiana: Notes and the illustration in *News* 33: 10-11 prompted a flush of Manx records, all comm. Miss M. Devereau, the first two published as '*C. muralis*' (Proc. IOMNHAS VIII, 1976). Mona Terrace, Douglas, persisted c. 10 years at base of chimney until removed during repair

work; limestone wall-base behind IOM Bank, Castletown. Dr L.S. Garrad. Crosby, tops of slate/quartz walls, disused quarry, where known for at least 10 years (1983), LSG; Braddan, on grassy road-verge in heavy shade, 1983 (known at least since 1978), MD & LSG. MD writes "It is somewhat curious that this is the species which establishes itself when it is *C. poscharskyana* which does better in Manx gardens".

Lobelia erinus L.: Croston, S. Lancs., after recent works on banks of R. Lostock, J.M. Smith; a pavement weed, Tower St., Ipswich, Mrs E.M. Hyde.

Malcolmia maritima (L.) R. Br. (Virginian Stock): Mortar joints of brick wall and paths, Charnock Richard, Lancs: new garden, Great Knowley, Chorley, Lancs., J.M. Smith. An increasing garden escape, not of bird-seed origin as suggested by the sender but probably bird-sown.

Matthiola longipetala (Vent.) DC. ssp. *bicornis* (Sibth. & Sm.) P.W. Ball (Night-scented Stock): Car park, M4 Service Station, Membury, Wilts. A.L. Grenfell. Hb. ALG. ?Less frequently sown in gardens than the preceding but occasionally escaping.

Trachystemon orientalis (L.) G. Don: Patch on damp roadside in shade, Porlock Weir, Somerset, Apr. 1983. J. Ravest, conf. and comm. J. Edmondson. LIV. New to Somerset.

Tiarella wherryi Lakela: Wall of old power house, Stradey Woods, Llanelli, W. Glam., 1979. I.K. Morgan, det. I.M. Vaughan, comm. G. Ellis. A single plant apparently escaped from the grounds of Stradey Castle. 1st Br. record of this shade-loving member of *Saxifragaceae*.

AQUATICS

Records of *Crassula helmsii* and *Elodea nuttallii* continue to abound and clearly demonstrate the spread of these aquatic adventives throughout the country: it is not possible to acknowledge or devote space to each, but please continue to send them in – they are of great value.

1983 brought no less than five records of a relative newcomer to our ponds and ditches – *Myriophyllum aquaticum* (Velloso) Verdc. (*M. brasiliense* Camb.). Mrs F. Le Sueur communicated three of them:-

On mud, drying farm pool, Trinity, Jersey. R. Knightbridge.

Edge of duck ponds Augrez Manor, Trinity, Jersey. R. Knightbridge.

"Established – introduced deliberately?"

By old German reservoir, St Catherine, Jersey. R. Long. With *Lemna minuscula*, det. Dr A.C. Leslie.

M. aquaticum and *Lemna minuscula* are both new to Jersey. This attractive aquarist's throw-out was located in a pond on the common at Nomansland, S. Hants. by J.N.B. Milton, J. Ounsted, Lady Rosemary FitzGerald and A.J. Byfield in November (det. A.J. Byfield). Also by the writer, A.J. Byfield and K.F. Spurgin on the council tip at St Martin-in-Meneage, Cornwall where several plants were growing on a dry bank. Det. & Hb. ALG. (See also *Watsonia* 11, 375-376).

Sagittaria subulata (L.) Buchenau: Acid pond, Shortheath Common, N. Hants., July 1983. J.N.B. Milton, Lady Rosemary FitzGerald and B. Turrard. Det. J.N.B.M. who writes "Still abundant and obviously established. Occasionally mistaken for other species". (Especially *Luronium natans*, which it closely resembles).

Pistia stratiotes L. (*Araceae*): Margin of pond, Upper Walthamstow, S. Essex, Sept. 1983. J.N.B. Milton, conf. R.M. Burton. First British record – c. 100 plants growing with *Lemna trisulca* and *L. gibba*. A *pantropic*, free-floating perennial often grown in aquaria – sometimes a severe pest in the Tropics; at the end of November all the plants had apparently been killed by frost.

Thank you again for your records. I hope to computerize all of these in the near future which should eventually allow more time for correspondence (at present sometimes rather delayed, I'm afraid). I am currently assembling material for illustrated notes on *Cucurbitaceae* in Br. which hopefully will be presented in the next issue. Meanwhile good hunting in 1984.

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

LETTERS

FRUITFUL LIAISON: ROADSIDE VERGES IN N.W. ESSEX

The chalky boulder clay of North West Essex has some valuable botanical sites, most of them on roadside verges, against which pressure from agriculture, urban development and container traffic is probably as great as in any other part of the country.

Care of Special Verges is likely to be only a small part of the work-load of both County Council officials and County Trust Officers. Our local authority Planning Department does not acknowledge its responsibility for complete verge marking and there is no fund for conservation of flora other than for tree-planting. As a result we have had to make efforts to establish closer co-operation with the Highways Area Engineer and District Surveyor. I was surprised and very encouraged by the practical help they are giving and would like to hear of other experiences in liaison of this kind.

When it was clear that we accepted the prior claims of public safety, supply of services and cost, over botanical interest and amenity we were given valuable help in lessening the effect of these limiting factors on the verge flora.

One example of this occurred when it was necessary to alleviate flooding by digging drainage channels, and another when a cable had to be laid along a special verge.

Rather than establish points, we concentrate on anticipating solutions to possible difficulties so as to ensure that the advice we give is genuinely workable. This means asking questions, and again the degree of co-operation is unexpected. The Area Engineer also offered to advise us of plans for all major road works and tree-planting affecting any verges. This and their immediate readiness to act on complaints has increased our control of verges of all kinds.

The speed of one such response converted an avid writer-to-the-papers from a dangerous look-and-say conservationist to an equally enthusiastic ally overnight.

As County Trust adviser to the Council on Roadside Verges, I find it very worrying that verges which were attractive and stable, though not necessarily of high botanical interest, are now at risk from roadwork deposits and build-up to support renovated edges. Moreover when a new verge is established it is customary to top soil and seed it. All this adds to the future cost of management as well as creating stands of coarse weeds which may or may not stabilise into something more interesting in about five years' time.

JOAN E. MUMMERY, 60 South Road, SAFFRON WALDEN, Essex CB11 3ON.

STANDARD TETRAD LAYOUT, PLEASE

May I make an appeal on behalf of puzzled and bewildered botanists who make use of the new type of county floras which print tetrad maps showing distribution of the species. These are of great interest but it is rather infuriating to find that each new flora seems to have decided on a different method of designating the tetrads.

The standard practice adopted by the Ordnance Survey is to quote the grid reference numbers which define the bottom left corner of the tetrad and I find these simple to use without any conversion into letters, since that is what is found on O.S. maps.

As examples of the difference, the following are what have been chosen for the counties in the south-east.

Of the above, the one with which I have most sympathy is that of London, but in the text, the logic has been spoiled by writing tetrad TQ 08 60 as 06T80.

As it seems that future flora compilers have many more formats to choose from, may I make an appeal for someone to decree a standard format to be used in future.

G.H. FORSTER, 37 High Street, Selsey, CHICHESTER, W. Sussex PO20 0RB.

London	08	28	48	68	88
	06	26	46	66	86
	04	24	44	64	84
	02	22	42	62	82
	00	20	40	60	80

Kent	E	J	P	U	Z
	D	I	N	T	Y
	C	H	M	S	X
	B	G	L	R	W
	A	F	K	Q	V

Surrey	A5	B5	C5	D5	E5
	A4	B4	C4	D4	E4
	A3	B3	C3	D3	E3
	A2	B2	C2	D2	E2
	A1	B1	C1	D1	E1

Sussex	A	B	C	D	E
	F	G	H	J	K
	L	M	N	O	P
	Q	R	S	T	U
	V	W	X	Y	Z

BOTANISTICAL!

Botanologists will be indebted to Mary Briggs for her Key to Critical Botanists – 2: The ‘Davidmacaceae’, with its footnote on the significance of the spelling (McClintock indicates Irish origin, McLintock Scottish) (*BSBI News* 32 p. 4, 1982).

I wish to alert BSBI members to the possibility that the Scottish subspecies (?) of David McClintock actually exists, though the evidence is admittedly fragmentary (perhaps fragile). In Reynolds, J., and Tampion, J., *Double Flowers, A Scientific Study* (1983) (later than Brigg’s paper) we find on p. 173 the following:

McClintock, D. (1957) *Supplement to the pocket guide to wild flowers* McLintock, D. (1966) ‘Double flowered hardy heathers’

I am sure some of our keener members will soon be out on the trail of this cryptic taxon.

PETER YEO, University Botanic Garden, CAMBRIDGE CB2 1JF.

REQUESTS

WANTED

A BOTANIST FOR THE JULY/AUGUST 1984 EXPEDITION BY THE BRATHAY EXPLORATION GROUPS TO ZIMBABWE

Last year this group recorded African wildlife in conjunction with the National Parks organisation and the study will continue this year in Chete Safari Area, where it is hoped to carry out a botanical survey. Further details from:

CHRISTINE CLEPHAN, Brathay Exploration Group, Brathay Hall, AMBLESIDE Cumbria LA22 0HP. Tel: (0966) 33042

MISS EDITH RAWLINS

I am collecting biographical material on Miss Rawlins, and would be most grateful for any personal anecdotes and information on her botanical activities. Between 1933 and 1950 she botanised in Ireland, and in Suffolk, Surrey, Hampshire, Essex and Buckinghamshire. She may also have been in Glamorgan in 1937. From 1950 to her death in an accident in 1956, she was based in Winscombe, Somerset.

If anyone remembers her, would they please contact me. Postage refunded.

Lady ROSEMARY FITZGERALD, 40 Alfred Place, Kingsdown, BRISTOL BS2 8HD

WILD VEGETABLES

We are concerned with the conservation of vegetable species and maintain six vegetable sanctuaries where we grow original wild species in order to establish their variability for the benefit of gene banks and botanic gardens.

Would members of BSBI let us know of any sites where the undermentioned species have been growing in isolation for long periods: *Brassica oleracea*, the wild cabbage, *Beta maritima*, the original beet, *Allium ampeloprasum*, the wild leek. *B. oleracea* appears to vary from kale to sprouting broccoli and there is a possibility of the genes for clubroot resistance.

LAWRENCE D. HILLS, Director, Henry Doubleday Res. Assoc., Bocking, BRAINTREE, Essex CM7 6RW.

BOOKS WANTED

Would anyone willing to dispose of (i) 6th edition (c. 1938) Willis: *Dictionary of Flowering Plants and Ferns* (ii) Darlington: *Plant Galls*, please communicate with: M. BAND (Mrs.), 22 Wickfield Avenue, CHRISTCHURCH, Dorset BH23 1JB.

WHITE ERICACEAE IN THE WILD

Who has seen a white-flowered *Andromeda* in the wild? I have traced no record, but surely it must have arisen somewhere. Could herbarium curators kindly see if they have any specimens?

And much the same for *Erica erigena*. 15 years ago there was a plant above Bellacragher Bay in Co Mayo, but it has not been seen recently. Nor, I think, are white *E x watsonii* or *E x williamsii* known, or are they? Replies, please, to:

D. McCLINTOCK, Bracken Hill, Platt, SEVENOAKS, Kent TN15 8JH.

HYDROCOTYLE MOSCHATA

Can any member please assist my study of the Umbelliferae by giving a location for the above species on the mainland of the British Isles?

MICHAEL MILEY, 17 Alder close, DESBOROUGH, Northants.

SEMI-PERSISTENT ADVENTIVES

I should like to contact rubbish-tip hunters for any information they may have on the successional sequence that occurs when these sites are left to re-vegetate naturally. My interest also extends to any aliens, garden escapes etc which persist for more than one year, or ephemerals which germinate and complete their life-cycle to reproduction in large numbers. Do such tips act as refuges, at least temporarily, for interesting species whose former habitats are diminishing rapidly?

P.J. SHAW, 64 Puck Lane, BASILDON, Essex SS16 4AX.

IDENTIFICATION PROGRAMS ON MICROCOMPUTERS

I am being asked more and more frequently whether I have computer programs and data available on floppy discs. The program for identification exists as object code in FORTRAN IV, or in compiled form for Z80 micros with CP/M-compatible operating systems. Datasets available include *Taraxacum*, *Euphrasia*, *Rubus* in Scotland, vegetative British grasses, world angiosperm families, and world monocot families (all with corresponding polyclaves).

Discs can be copied FREE for the following formats:

- 1) 8-inch single-sided single or double density (IBM).
- 2) 5 ¼-inch double-sided double-density soft-sectored, as with the TORCH disc pack for the BBC-B micro.

Other formats can be copied commercially at your expense (£10 - £20). If your micro is not CP/M-compatible, you will need to have your own FORTRAN compiler. The files are too large for use with cassette tapes. The program does not exist in BASIC (any volunteers to translate it?)

R.J. PANKHURST, British Museum (Nat. Hist.), LONDON SW7.

THE VICE-COUNTY CONTROVERSY

Big squares beat all counties

As an erstwhile Recorder in VCs 41-47 and 49, I find it strange that contributors to the debate on recording units in *B.S.B.I. News* (35) can effectively discredit vice-counties while recommending the substitution of modern administrative counties in their place! The proposals already in preparation for new legislation to abolish the metropolitan counties by 1986 demonstrate yet again the transient nature of administrative boundaries. Besides, the inequities of size among counties (and "regions" in Scotland) have actually been exacerbated by the 1974 reorganisation, (compare Berkshire and North Yorkshire!). Even now, the intricacies of outline possessed by some counties would be a positive merit if they were pieces in a jig-saw puzzle but make a nonsense of any argument for their use in recording (for example, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Buckinghamshire)!

To maintain counties as territories for recording is to perpetuate a system which will ensure that some areas are favoured by an excess of botanical attention while others are condemned to obscurity because, in isolation, they are unattractive. Not least of the consequences is that coverage will be patchy and some will fail to achieve publication because it will not be viable.

Consider the improved prospects for sales of published floras if every one of them possessed equal intrinsic interest for the reader and if all of them fitted into a logical national series. The resulting publications would have much greater merit for overseas botanists because they would deal with areas of equal geographical size and similar botanical "weight". The irony is that it could so easily be achieved from the existing base of effort.

It seems to me infinitely more exciting to have a territory of 100 Km square (60 x 60 miles) for recording than to be confined to the "cabbage patch" of a single county. This larger area is big enough to contain a good approximation to a natural region and yet is small enough to be accessible from convenient centres of population and/or resorts. The principle of using these "big squares" as units is scientifically respectable and indeed they have already formed the basis of a biogeographical appraisal of the British flora by Professor H.J.B. Birks in Sir Harry Godwin's "*History of the British Flora*" (2nd edn. 1975) p. 447/8.

I am constantly surprised to discover how sensitively the major grid lines have been drawn on the British map (as if to recognise salient features of the coastline and interior)! Look at the lines bisecting river estuaries (R. Exe, R. Nith) or cutting the coast at strategic points (Blakeney, Dodman Point, Stackpole Head, Dinas Head) or marking the Highland boundary (Dunblane to Aberfoyle), Coquetdale and Deeside. The Big Squares are not anonymous: each one has a unique character and scenic variety enough to satisfy anyone. They could readily be named if names were needed, yet their identity is known by just two letters.

What other scheme can match these qualities?

B.A. SEDDON, The Herbarium, City Museums & Art Gallery, BIRMINGHAM B3 3DH.

Bogged down

I deplore Rodney Burton's suggestion that we should adopt modern administrative county boundaries instead of Watsonian vice-counties. Since the Government is proposing to abolish six of these within two or three years, what is the point? If we seek to preserve county loyalty, we should adhere to the old historic counties. These are, in fact, often an aggregation of vice-counties and sometimes, as with the smaller shire counties, identical with Watson's boundaries. Since I live on the Oxon/Bucks border, within a few miles of Stokenchurch and Kingsey, which used to be in Oxon and are now in Bucks, and of Towersey, which used to be in Bucks and is now in Oxon, I am acutely aware of the way administrators and politicians monkey around with county boundaries every few years.

No, if we are to achieve the benefits of stable boundaries, it must either be the old counties or grid squares. Everything between is a quaking bog.

R. FITTER, Drifts, Chinnor Hill, OXFORD, OX9 4BS.

Recorders' choice

May I put in a plea for Dr Dony's admirable solution, that the Recorders be allowed to choose their area of recording; and does it really matter if some things get recorded twice? However, substituting the county for the vice-county, as a unit, would not work in the larger counties, such as Hants, which are split into more than one vice-county. Especially in the south, the number of records which arrive, are more than one person can cope with. It seems to me, that the reason why vice-counties 38, 42 and 74 are producing so many records in *Watsonia*, is that they were previously under-recorded. Only first and second n.c. & s. are accepted. You don't get many of them in Hants. If we used centrads, the space taken up in *Watsonia* would be colossal; and why does any one want that, when we have the Atlas? As to a new Comital Flora, I can't see any point in it at all, when we have the Atlas. Re-arranging the collections at the B.M. would entail a fearsome lot of work for somebody, – to no purpose, for it would make it harder for Flora writers.

There remains this strange assumption, that recorders should be prepared to put into print, six-figure references for all their most precious records. One of our recent finds has been *Carex x pieperana* P. Junge, in a much easier place for southerners, than any previous ones. There is only one tuft of it, and if anybody thinks I am going to print its 6-figure reference, they can think again.

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

A Northern View

The four correspondents from the Home Counties advocating the use of post-1974 administrative areas for B.S.B.I. recording (*BSBI News*, 35.) seem never to have looked at a map showing their boundaries elsewhere in Britain. In the north and west the ideal of units roughly equal in size and basically circular in shape is much more nearly attained with the present vice-county system.

In Scotland, for instance, the nine post-1974 regions range from 1306 to 25124 sq km in area, and the 53 districts from 20 to 6756 sq km. Even if the bigger regions were divided into districts five units greater than 4000 sq km would remain – the present vice-counties average about 2000 sq km, and probably none exceeds 4000 sq km. Also the shape of some districts is far from satisfactory.

Another point to consider is that the 1974 reorganisation is not likely to be permanent. Various political parties are pledged to alter the system, and in some areas e.g. Avon and Humberside, there are strong pressures for local revision. So all the effort of getting agreement on new recording units and revisiting our present records could well be wasted.

DAVID WELCH, East Fernbank, Woodside Road, BANCHORY, Kincards.

Boundaries in Strathclyde

Boundaries are the bane of the plant-recorder. It is, I suppose, understandable that those who botanise mainly in areas which are short of well-marked physical features should feel tempted to prescribe a grid-square system as being of universal suitability. They might, however, spare a thought for us in the Highlands of Scotland – where so often the vice-county boundaries are easily recognised – whereas the boundaries of grid systems can be, by their very nature, purely hypothetical.

As for disparity in recording – the more thoroughly an area is worked, the harder it becomes to provide publishable records. Again, some correspondents seem to advocate the use of the “modern administrative area”. I can see that this might work in some cases, but it is grotesquely inappropriate to us. It would be ridiculous for the BSBI to presume to impose a system of, at best, local suitability over areas for which such a system can only be disadvantageous. For instance, here we are in Strathclyde Region (it is enormous), Argyll and Bute District (here Argyll doesn't mean the same as geographical Argyll, large chunks are hived off). And notice that Arran is to be separated from Bute – to go along with Ayrshire I suppose. All previous records would have to be reassessed and presumably republished.

Incidentally, I do favour using the Grid, as an adjunct to recording on a vice-county basis – in my area. For others, I won't prescribe.

ARCHIE KENNETH, Stronachullin, Ardrishaig, ARGYLL.

What are we recording for?

The many comments and arguments put forward recently for and against vice-county recording have prompted me to consider seriously, why there should be any argument at all.

I submit that the current system does not fulfil the requirements of the recorder in the field nor those who would wish to glean information from the records. Allotting each recorder a series of squares will create chaos. I have put my observations in three categories as follows:-

Gathering Data

Most old records, and unfortunately many recent ones, are just the acknowledgement of one species growing at one particular place. These records are of use mainly for the rarer species. There is a healthy increase of survey work to provide information on all species found at a location.

The Grid system is a frame of reference which is invaluable for identifying an exact locality but it is only meant as a tool. A grid square is almost impossible to survey accurately in the field.

The best units of study are those easily definable such as a wood or field, or in an area under intensive agriculture, perhaps the field boundaries themselves. In an unenclosed area natural boundaries such as streams and ridges have to be used. If the area of study is then defined by the use of grid references it is possible for someone to return and cover the same ground.

Storing Data

A record gathered in the field is not always assignable to just one 1km square but because a field is usually under one ownership it is invariably in one parish and usually in one V.C.

The records are currently stored on a V.C. basis and as a result information about sites on the edge of that area is often applicable to a different County.

The simplest solution to our problem is to carry on as we are and make do. The most satisfactory solution would be to redefine the area covered by our recorders to be the current Constitutional unit which most closely corresponds to their Vice County and they would then only need to sort out records on the edge of their territory. It makes very little sense to force a major reorganisation to recording by grid squares especially when this does not fit in with the method of recording in the field.

Extracting Information

Information is extracted from the records for a variety of reasons, scientific study, historical comparison or because information is required by planning and conservation bodies.

For scientific study a 'field' survey already contains a lot of background information and the vegetation of a field or wood is what is required by conservationists, not the flora of a 1km square.

I was originally in favour of retaining V.C.s intact but I now believe that making use of the constitutional boundaries would be a more useful solution (if our hard worked V.C. recorders do not mind a 'little' extra work to begin with).

Which ever way we go one thing is certain, we must change our attitude towards which records are important. First and second county records are usually of little or no consequence but what is important is that we do not lose what little semi-natural vegetation we have left. That means recording the richness of a locality, not the rarest species found, and making sure that the record is easily found when the information is required.

R.D. RANDALL, 12 Vineyards, BATH BA1 5NA.

A false dichotomy

For accurate reporting of a plant find one would usually give a name to the location and then determine a grid reference. When following up a reference the opposite process is often followed. Both, a largely numerical reference (grid) and a verbal reference, are desirable. Whether one favours vice-counties or administrative counties for the latter will be determined considerably by where one lives. (In my case VC. 61 S.E. Yorks follows natural boundaries far better than N. Humberside). From previous correspondence there appear to be virtues in both methods so why not record both, which I imagine is done generally in any case?

The argument that all this governs entries in Plant Records seems somewhat spurious. Any system will only be as effective as the people who operate it.

E. CHICKEN, Corner House, Scarborough Road, DRIFFIELD, Humberside YO25 7EH.

BOOK NOTES

In the July part of *Watsonia*, Vol. 15 (2), it is hoped to include reviews of the following books:

A History of Naturalists in North East England, edited by A.G. Lunn.

Flora of the London Area, by R.M. Burton.

Flowers of the Wild – Ontario and the Great Lake Region, by Z. Zichmanis and J. Hodgins.

Collins Guide to the Ferns, Mosses and Lichens of Britain and Northern and Central Europe, by H.M. Jahns.

The Flora of Iceland, by A. Löve.

Flora of Connemara and the Burren, by D.A. Webb and M.J.P. Scannell.

Plant Collecting and Herbarium Development – a Manual, by J.S. Womersley.

Man's impact on Vegetation, edited by W. Holzner, M.J.A. Werger and I. Ikusima.

Elm, by R.H. Richens.

A Checklist of the Flora of Cambridgeshire, by G. Crompton and H.L.K. Whitehouse.

Outline of Plant Classification, by S. Holmes.

Paleobotany and the Evolution of Plants, by W.N. Stewart.

The Conservation and Development Programme for the UK, by B. Johnson *et al.*

Double Flowers: A Scientific Study, by J. Reynolds and J. Tampion.

The following books have been received recently. Those that will NOT be reviewed in *Watsonia* are marked with an asterisk:

**Plant Physiology in relation to Horticulture*, ed. 2, by J.K.A. Bleasdale. Pp. 143, with 52 text-figures. Macmillan, London. 1983. Price £5.95 (ISBN 0-333-36452-X).

**Plants and Microclimate*, by H.G. Jones. Pp. 323, with numerous text-figures and tables. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1983. Prices £27.50 (hardback, ISBN 0-521-24849-3), £12.50 (paperback, ISBN 0-521-27016-2).

**The Lively Membranes*, by R.N. Robertson. Pp. 206, with 94 text-figures. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1983. Prices £12.50 (hardback, ISBN 0-521-23747-5), £4.95 (paperback, ISBN 0-521-28202-0).

**Plant Biotechnology*, edited by S.H. Martell and H. Smith. Pp. 334, with numerous text-figures and tables. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1983. Price £35.00 (ISBN 0-521-24550-8).

**Genetic Aspect of Plant Nutrition*, edited by M.R. Sarie and B.C. Loughman. Pp. 495, with numerous text-figures and tables. Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, etc. 1983. Price Dfl 195.00 (ISBN 90-247-2822-3).

**Biology and Ecology of Mangroves*, edited by H.J. Teas. Pp. 188, with frontispiece, 88 text-figures and 30 tables. Junk, The Hague. 1983. Price Dfl 160.00 (ISBN 90-6193-948-8). Although clearly not directly relevant to British or Irish botany, this series of papers on mangroves is a valuable contribution to their study.

**Garden Trees*, by R. Helliwell. Pp. 95, with 6 B. & W. photos and 19 text-figures. Wiley, Chichester. 1983. Price £9.50 (ISBN 0-471-10382-9). This useful handbook includes, in its relatively slender bulk, discussions of why, where and how to plant trees in gardens, how to care for them, various aspects of fruit trees and their cultivation, and a helpful annotated list of decorative trees. The appendices seem to account for any topics left out of the main text. An admirable book.

Dispersal and Distribution. An International Symposium, edited by K. Kubitzki.

The Natural History Prose Writings of John Clare, edited by M. Grainger.

Flowers of the British Isles, by D. Streeter and I. Garrard.

Atlas der Brombeeren von Dänemark, Schleswig – Holstein und dem benachbarten Niedersachsen (Gattung Rubus L. Sektionen Rubus und Corylifolii), by H.O. Martensen, A. Pedersen and H.E. Weber.

Flowers in the Wild, by M. and D. Parish.

Plant Science & Scientists in St. Andrews, by J.A. Macdonald.

Finally, those who have found Vernon Heywood's *Flowering Plants of the World* a useful concise guide to Angiosperm families may be interested to know that an account of Australian families in the same format but with keys down to genera has recently been published: - *Flowering Plants in Australia*, edited by B.D. Morley and H.R. Toelken. Rigby Publishers, Adelaide, London, etc. 1983. Price \$ A 65.00.

Norman K.B. Robson

NEWS FROM OUNDLE LODGE

1. With reference to the price changes in BSBI News 35, the Flora of the Clyde Area is £2.50 + £1.00!
2. SPECIAL OFFER to members of the BSBI – TASCPO Pocket Microscope. **The last day for receiving orders will be the 31st of May.**
3. Tasco pocket microscope – SPARE BULBS – Please make a note of the address NOW. TASCPO, Service and Sales, Unit 4, Hambridge Lane, Newbury, Berks RG14 5TU. Send 75p, that covers postage.
4. Spring Supplement to the Autumn Stock list. If you would like a copy send a s.a.e. marked "SS". These books will in any case be included in the Autumn 1984 list.
5. ATLAS FLORAE EUROPAEAEE. Various members have asked me whether I can supply volumes of this publication. After an extended correspondence with the publishers in Finland I have succeeded in an arrangement with them. The prices I have been quoted are in USA dollars. Please write to me for firm orders and be patient in their delivery time. I will invoice you when I send the book(s).

MARGARET PERRING, Oundle Lodge, Oundle, Peterborough PE8 5TN.
Tel: (0832) 73388

STOP PRESS

INTERNATIONAL GARDEN FESTIVAL

Liverpool, May 2 – October 14, 1984

BSBI members have the opportunity of combining the Field Meeting in the Liverpool area on July 28 and 29 with a visit to the Garden Festival. The emphasis during the field meeting will be on plants of man-made habitats; here you can find Pyramidal Orchids and Quaking Grass growing on Mucky Mountains (heaps of highly calcareous waste from the Leblanc process once used in the chemical industry), and see sand-dune plants such as Lymegrass and Yellow-wort growing on sand hills in the middle of St. Helens!

If you want to take advantage of a reduced-rate admission, it is hoped to arrange a party booking for the Garden Festival on Monday July 30. Please contact Dr John Edmondson, Merseyside County Museum, Liverpool for further information.

POSTPONEMENT

The Dublin Field meeting at Rush Sandhills shown in the programme as taking place on 3rd June, will now be held on **10th June 1984**.

LAST ORDERS

Members without the *Atlas of the British Flora* or the *Critical Supplement* but saving up to buy them may wish to note that there are now less than 80 copies of each in the Publisher's stock. As the Society and the Publisher are agreed there will be no further reprints of either, those wanting new copies are advised not to wait too long.

Margaret Perring Oundle 7.3.84.

Fuchsia magellanica – a correction

A sharp eyed reader, E.W. Green of Kirtlington, Oxford draws attention to the measurements shown in the sketch in News 34 p. 15, the caption to which should read "from the base of the corolla" not the base of the pedicel and Dr Nelson confirms this.

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