

Recording in Wexford (H12), 2014

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I am not sure where to start as 2014 was such a successful year, with more than double the number of records collected the previous year. Recording took place over the whole year with over 70% of the records made in the southern half of the county. One of the surprises was the large number of new county records, 38 in total, 17 of which are native.

The first new county record was made by Paula O'Meara on 12 January with a large patch of *Polypodium x shivasiae* (*P. cambricum x interjectum*) on the bank of the railway at Dunbrody (S71.15), determined by Rob Crooke the BSBI referee for *Polypodium*. By the end of March I had added two more of the new county records: *Allium subhirsutum* (Hairy Garlic) three clumps on roadside ditch, Stonepark (S93.35) and *Scilla bithynica* (Turkish Squill) well established along road verge, over ditch and into field, Ballyvergin (S87.25).

April saw me spending a few days collecting dandelions, of the 30 or so specimens I collected 12 were new county records: *Taraxacum alatum* – road verge, Macoye Lower (T209.664); *T. atactum* – road verge, Clonough (T210.667); *T. britannicum* – slumping sea-cliff, Haggard (S846.070); *T. duplidentifrons* – graveyard, Ballycullane (S794.144); *T. haematicum* – dune, Carna (T127.660); *T. hamatiforme* – road verge, Landscape (S707.239); *T. intumescens* – gateway to farmyard, Rathumney (S769.166); *T. lingulatum* – road verge, Ballycullane (S795.144); *T. pannulatum* – bank of car park in New Ross (S718.273); *T. sellandii* – road verge, Ballylannan (S840.143); *T. subhamatum* – road verge, Stokestown (S694.236); *T. undulatum* – top of sea-cliff, Bannow (S843.069). All determined by John Richards.

Ciaran Byrne had *Glebionis segetum* (Corn Marigold) along the margin of a field at Carna (T12.06), a species which had a bumper year in 2014, turning up in stubble fields all over the county.

Frankie Tennant & Roy Watson found lots of *Spirodela polyrhiza* (Greater Duckweed) in a marshy area on the edge of Tacumshin Lake (T06.06), this is the first county record since 1901. Their *Filago vulgaris* (Common Cudweed) on the dunes at Rosslare (T09.17) was new for the hectad and *Veronica catenata* (Pink Water-speedwell) was the first hectad record since 1990. They also had *Raphanus raphanistrum* subsp. *maritimus* (Sea Radish) on the dunes at Rosslare (T09.16), the first record for the hectad since 1896. *Viola canina* (Heath Dog-violet) at Nethertown (T12.04) was the first record for the hectad since David Webb recorded it there in 1956.

Jim Hurley found over a hundred *Cyperus eragrostis* (Pale Galingale) on a road side at Grange, (S97.05); a new county record. Mary Foley asked Paula O'Meara to identify a grass growing as a weed in an arable field at Wood Graigue (S91.12), it turned out to be *Phalaris canariensis* (Canary-grass), new for the hectad. A species that is increasingly turning up in arable fields.

Gaudinia fragilis (French Oat-grass) found in May on the Hook Peninsula (S70) by Paula O'Meara was one of the most interesting finds of the year, here it was found in large quantities on damp road and lane verges and a damp meadow, from four monads. Paula added another four new county records: *Saxifraga x urbium* (Londonpride) – garden discard surviving in house ruin, Dunbrody (S72.15); *Hordeum vulgare* (Six-rowed Barley) – verge of the N25, Ballymacar (S74.26); *Bergenia crassifolia* (Elephant-ears) – single clump surviving on ditch, Haytown (S76.05) and *Lavandula angustifolia* (Garden Lavender) – self-sown on road/kerb verge, Ardavan Business Park (T05.24). Paula found a new site for *Trifolium occidentale* (Western Clover) at Booley Bay (S74.06) on the cliffs, this is the

most westerly site in Ireland. Paula has been making good progress on the complex *Dryopteris affinis* agg. group. *Dryopteris borreri* is now found in a scattering of sites over the county.

Ro FitzGerald joined Paula O'Meara and me for some recording in May at Carnivan Head (S78.02) to search for *Trifolium scabrum* (Rough Clover) where it was last reported by H.C. Hart in 1882 on the bare banks at the top of the sea-cliffs. To start with the grass was so thick it didn't look very promising for any small species of plant, it was not long before the cliffs rose higher and the turf was exposed, here the clover grew in profusion for over 30m. The next day we visited several Pingos at Camaross (S88.24), here we had a large population of *Eleogiton fluitans* (Floating Club-rush), a rare species in the county.

Roger Goodwillie found a number of good records at Balcarrighill Quarry (T11.50), his *Barbarea intermedia* (Medium-flowered Winter-cress) and *Danthonia decumbens* (Heath-grass) were new for the hectad and his *Geranium pyrenaicum* (Hedgerow Crane's-bill) was the first record for the hectad since 1943, when recorded by Mildred Ferguson at Gorey.

Shane Farrel found some really interesting species from the marsh south of Cahore Point (T20.44), his *Rumex maritimus* (Golden Dock) is the first county record away from the southeast corner of the county, here it grew along a newly made track and in the corner of a damp field. Also along the track, and may have come in with the rubble used for the track was an abundance of *Senecio inaequidens* (Narrow-leaved Ragwort), a second county record. Shane's *Azolla filiculoides* (Water Fern) was the first for this part of the county and his *Scutellaria galericulata* (Skullcap) was new for the marsh and hectad. From the dunes (T21.44) in front of the marsh Shane found *Cynoglossum officinale* (Hound's-tongue), the first record here since 1961.

Zoe Devlin was surprised to find *Crassula helmsii* (New Zealand Pigmyweed) had turned up in her garden pond at Gibletstown (S90.11), the *Crassula* wasn't deliberately introduced, just wonder how it arrived!

Two get together of the Wexford Botany Group were arranged, the first was at Rosslare (T01) in April where we had a magical day, finding every species on our hit list. *Erysimum cheiranthoides* (Treacle-mustard) on an area of sandy waste ground on the edge of the golf course was the first county record since 1994. *Vicia lathyroides* (Spring Vetch) was flowering well in a number of locations and added to several new monads. The best find of the day was *Equisetum variegatum* (Variegated Horsetail) by a small pond, new for the hectad and the only extant site in the county. The second get together was again in April to record a monad at Bunclody (S90.56), we recorded 182 species. The rarest species recorded was *Filago minima* (Small Cudweed), on gravelly ground by a derelict building in woodland by the River Clady. *Sasa palmata* (Broad-leaved Bamboo) was running wild in the wood, forming a very extensive patch. Waste ground produced a number of rare non-native species, *Stachys byzantina* (Lamb's-ear) being the second record for the county.

On arrival from Wales in early June I explored a large area of waste ground at Rosslare Harbour (T13.12) on leaving the ferry. Here by the thousands were *Spergularia bocconeii* (Greek Sea-spurrey) and *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (Four-leaved Allseed) and a scattering of *Polypogon monspeliensis* (Annual Beard-grass), all three new county records. The real surprise was seeing *Geranium purpureum* (Little-Robin) amongst the gravel by the railway and on an earth bank, a species that is otherwise only known from Cos Cork and Waterford in Ireland. Later that day I visited the disused railway station at Ballycullane which is a stones throw from where I live, which back in March 2011 I had thought looked like the vegetative plants of Little-robin, sure enough they were this time. Not sure why I had not been back and checked before!

Also in June I added three more new county records: A single plant of *Epilobium x confusilobum* (*E. montanum* x *E. brunnescens*) on the side of a forest road at Prospect (S91.60), growing with both parents. A specimen was sent to T. Pennington the BSBI referee for *Epilobium* who confirmed my identification. In wet woodland on the side of a stream at Ballyhoge (S96.29) I had one clump of *Carex x boeninghausiana* (*C. paniculata* x *remota*) with both parents. On the site of the disused railway station at Wellingtonbridge (S85.13) I had four plants of *Senecio inaequidens* (Narrow-leaved Ragwort). Not a new species for the county, but a new variety was a large patch of *Vicia sepium* var. *ochroleuca* from the verge of the N11 north of Enniscorthy (S97.42), the flowers are cream turning an orange colour with age.

I had a few days in September recording and added a further eight new county records: A single plant of *Atriplex longipes* (Long-stalked Orache) was found on the edge of reeds by Tacumshin Lake, Sigginstown (T06.06). Two days later I was looking for *Atriplex* hybrids at Arthurstown (S71.10) and found *Atriplex x gustafssoniana* (*A. longipes* x *prostrata*) at the top of the beach. No *A. longipes* was growing with the hybrid. One of the nice surprises of the year was finding four fruiting trees of *Crataegus laevigata* (Midland Hawthorn) in a roadside hedge at Bree (S94.32), a rare species in Ireland. A piece of waste ground in Wexford Town (T04.20) had a beautiful flowering self-sown *Clematis tangutica* (Orange-peel Clematis) smothering the thistles and docks. The sepals really do look and feel like orange peel! At Kilmuckridge (T16.41) on some sandy waste ground I had three *Lupinus x regalis* (Russell Lupin (*L. arboreus* x *polyphyllus*)) here they were growing with: *Filago minima* (Small Cudweed), *F. vulgaris* (Common Cudweed) and *Ornithopus perpusillus* (Bird's-foot). At Ballygortin (T14.43) I had a clump of *Pseudosasa japonica* (Arrow Bamboo) by a pond in a very overgrown wood. A visit to Clone (T01.47) to check to see if I had identified the *Berberis vulgaris* (Barberry) I had found back in March came as a surprise as it was *Robinia pseudoacacia* (False-acacia) growing in the field hedge and not a *Berberis*.

I joined Jim Hurley and Paula O'Meara in September for a trip to the Keeragh Islands (S86.05), these are two small islands off of the south coast of Wexford. The dominant species on both islands was *Atriplex prostrata* (Spear-leaved Orache) which more or less shaded out all other species apart from some large stands of *Malva arborea* (Tree-mallow). The most interesting species of the day was several *Polygonum oxyspermum* subsp. *raii* (Ray's Knotgrass).

A short visit home in December managed to add a further three new county records. While driving along I noticed the largest stand of *Muehlenbeckia complexa* (Wireplant) I have ever seen growing wild in a field hedge at Sleedagh (S99.13), here it was smothering four trees, just like ivy does. I went and checked a site I had earlier in the year seen *Viola arvensis* (Field Pansy) and *V. tricolor* subsp. *tricolor* (Wild Pansy) growing together at Ballyvalloo (T11.30), and as expected the hybrid *Viola x contempta* was there also. And finally on some rough ground by the new Tesco at Gorey (T14.59) was one *Bassia scoparia* (Summer-cypress).

The records have been analysed, and like the previous year the northern half of the county is in need of much work to catch up with the recording efforts in the southern half of the county. Of the 96 tetrads with no records prior to 2014, 44 were visited. There are now 195 tetrads with 1-99 species recorded, 243 tetrads with 100-199 species recorded, 144 tetrads with 200-299 species recorded, 44 tetrads with 300-399 species recorded and 9 tetrads with over 400 species recorded. Of the list of 211 species drawn up with no post 2000 records 16 of these were re-found in 2014, ten of which were native species. It is hoped in 2015 that some more of the species not seen since post 2000 will be re-found and more of the tetrads with no records will be visited. If you would like to take on a tetrad or like to try and re-find a species please do get in touch. More information can be found on

my BSBI Wexford webpage at: www.bsbi.org.uk/wexford. I have also started a blog where I put up photos of the rare species I come across in Wexford, there is a link on my BSBI Wexford page.