
Dr BARBARA BALLINGER O.B.E., M.R.C.P., M.R.C.Psych. (1941–2010)

Barbara Ballinger was born on 13 May 1941 in Middlesbrough and was always proud of her Yorkshire roots. She led a distinguished career as a psychiatrist and was thought of extremely highly by colleagues, students and patients. After her retirement she had more time to pursue her interest in botany and wildlife. Barbara and her husband Brian were appointed as joint BSBI vice county recorders for Easter Ross (vc106) in 2003 and they were later appointed by Butterfly Conservation as joint moth recorders for the same vice-county.

Barbara excelled at school and was greatly encouraged by a biology teacher to go on to higher education. She initially considered studying to be a vet, but was deemed unsuitable because she was too small, so she read medicine. Veterinary's loss was medicine's gain. At Sheffield University she was a prize-winning student as top of her year. After qualifying she initially worked in general medicine and rapidly gained Membership of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP), qualifying in 1965. She later went on to specialise in psychiatry and gained her MRCPsych.

While living in Sheffield she met Brian and they married in 1967 in Sheffield. In 1969 they moved to Dundee when Brian, who was working in psychiatry, accepted a senior post. Their first son was born soon after and later that year Barbara returned to work part-time, joining Brian in the psychiatric service in Dundee. In recognition of all her achievements Barbara was awarded the O.B.E. in 2003 for services to women with mental illness.

Barbara always had a love of plants and took a lot of pleasure from the splendid plant collection in their garden in Dundee and her tropical orchid collection in the conservatory for the dark evenings. After retirement Barbara had more time to pursue her interests in botany. She enjoyed studying the wildlife in the woodlands that she and Brian had bought. Despite her lack of height, Barbara became a skilled chainsaw operator, a valuable skill for woodlands management.

I first met Barbara and Brian in 1999 on a Field Studies Council Sedges and Rushes identification course at Kindrogan, taught by Clive Jermy. By then they had bought a flat in Fearn near Tain, and invited me to visit their lovely wood nearby. They have since helped me on numerous occasions with fieldwork for *Carex recta* and *C. salina*. I can vouch firsthand for Barbara's good humour, good cooking, common sense and an ability to get on with people, as well as her expertise in plant identification.

In the seven years since Barbara took on BSBI Recordership with Brian they tirelessly worked to systematically botanise Easter Ross. It is one of the biggest vice counties in Britain with much remote and mountainous country including 25 Munros (mountains over 3,000 foot) so they also became quite fit. They supported workshops for Scottish recorders run by the BSBI Scottish Officer and enthusiastically undertook various projects in a vice county with few members to call upon for help and many logistical challenges. Their practical approach, negotiating with local landowners and factors for easier access to a site, even hiring a boat to take them along a loch to enable them to reach a tetrad for Local Change records, good organisation and a good sense of humour enabled them to cheerfully get on with the task in hand.

They made some interesting discoveries, rediscovering *Carex maritima* (Curved Sedge) at Tarbatness after an absence of 100 years. As well as collecting large numbers of new records annually via MapMate, other notable achievements included publishing the excellent *Easter Ross Rare Plant Register* in 2009 and an *Easter Ross Plant Checklist (VC106)* in 2010 – both of which are available on the Easter Ross webpage of the BSBI website. If that wasn't enough, they surveyed and completed four Vascular Plant Site Condition Monitoring Reports

– for Kyle of Sutherland (2004 & 2010), Morrich More (2005) and Beaully Firth (2007). It was definitely a case of the sum of the parts was greater than the whole with Barbara and Brian!

Barbara's family was always important to her and she and Brian led a happy family life, bringing up two sons, Geoff and Bill. She died in Dundee on 27 October 2010 after a short illness.

I would like to express my thanks to Brian Ballinger, Jim McIntosh and Sue Whyte for providing much of the material in this account.

MARY DEAN



Barbara Ballinger (second from left) with other Scottish BSBI recorders at Glenmore Lodge in August 2008