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Front cover picture - *Epipactis palustris* (Marsh Helleborine), North Bull Island, Co. Dublin, Zoë Devlin © 2011. Taken from *Wildflowers of Ireland – A Personal Record*, see book reviews.

All species and common names in *Irish Botanical News* follow those in the database on the BSBI website <http://rbg-web2.rbge.org.uk/BSBI/> and Stace, C. (2010). *New Flora of the British Isles*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Cambridge University, Cambridge.

# CONTENTS

<i>Editorial</i> .....	4
<b>Articles</b>	
<i>Allium vineale</i> (var. <i>capsuliferum</i> ) on the Treble, Kerry ( <b>H2</b> ) Michael O’Sullivan.....	5
The comparative morphology of <i>Juncus effusus</i> L. (Soft-rush), <i>J. inflexus</i> L. (Hard Rush) and their interspecific hybrid <i>Juncus x diffusus</i> Hoppe. T. O’Mahony.....	5
<i>Erigeron annuus</i> (Tall Fleabane): a new record for Offaly ( <b>H18</b> ) Fiona Devery.....	14
<i>Hordelymus europaeus</i> (Wood Barley) in Ireland Mark Jannink.....	15
<b>Vice-county reports</b>	
A report on the flora of Cork ( <b>H3-H5</b> ), 2011 T. O’Mahony.....	16
Two <i>Rubus</i> cited in the <i>Flora of County Waterford</i> ( <b>H6</b> ) - renamed Paul R. Green.....	26
Recording in Co. Wexford ( <b>H12</b> ), 2011 Paul R. Green.....	27
Some notes from Offaly ( <b>H18</b> ) Fiona Devery.....	30
Interesting plants in Tyrone ( <b>H36</b> ), 2010-11 W.I. McNeill.....	33
Co. Down ( <b>H38</b> ) recording in 2011 Graham Day.....	36
<i>Field meeting reports, 2011</i> .....	41
<i>BSBI field meeting programme, 2012</i> .....	43
<i>A survey of Marsh Helleborine, Epipactis palustris</i> .....	48
<b>Recording the Irish Flora</b> .....	52
<b>Book reviews</b> .....	53
<b>Annual General Meeting, 2011</b> .....	55
Honorary Secretary’s Report 2010-2011 Michael Archer.....	56
<b>Maura Scannell (1924-2011) – reminiscences</b> .....	60

## EDITORIAL

Please note that the field trip as advertised in the BSBI year book 2012, 10 June on grass identification that was to be lead by Joanne Denyer has been cancelled. It has been replaced by another identification day on 9 August at Loughgall in Co. Armagh, to be lead by John Faulkner.

I spent a number of weeks doing survey work in 2011, mainly along the western seaboard. It was interesting to see how some plants vary as you move about Ireland. One of the species I took particular interest in was *Calystegia sepium* subsp. *roseata* when in Co. Galway. In many cases it was so hairy that I could see it was hairy long before I reached the plant. In Cos Waterford and Wexford the hairs have to be really searched for as they are extremely hard to find. Another interesting encounter was of a very dark purple-leaved form of *Poa annua* (Annual Meadow-grass) at Clifden. Here it was growing in flower tubs with *Begonia* with leaves of the same shade of purple. It made me start thinking had the *Poa* somehow evolved to blend in with the *Begonias* to help it stop being weeded out!

Finally, 2013 will be the 50 anniversary of the Irish Branch of the BSBI. If you have any ideas on ways we could celebrate next year, please do contact a committee member.

I would like to thank Olivier Martin and Zoë Devlin for help with this issue.

Paul R. Green, *Irish Botanical News*

## ***ALLIUM VINEALE* (VAR. *CAPSULIFERUM*) ON THE TREBLE, KERRY (H2)**

Michael O'Sullivan, *Knockavota, Milltown, Co. Kerry*

On the 14 September 2011 by a roadside verge I discovered three specimens of *Allium vineale* (Wild Onion) (var. *capsuliferum*), all flowers no bulbils.

This very rare form of the species come from one of two colonies in the townland where I live, first discovered in August 1984. In addition, the colour form is unique – blue purple. Buds are greenish white. The results of a study of the flowering biology of these plants down through the years reveal that the majority are of var. *compactum* (bulbils only). However a good number are var. *typicum* (both flowers and bulbils). It took all of twenty seven years to produce this very rare flowering form though in some years only a ring of bulbils at the base of the flowerheads of a few plants denied them unique status.

Voucher specimens where deposited in the herbaria of the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin (**DBN**), Trinity College, School of Botany, Dublin (**TCD**) and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (**K**) – the first of its type there for the British Isles, though they have old records from Russia, Germany, Hungary and Albania.

### **THE COMPARATIVE MORPHOLOGY OF *JUNCUS EFFUSUS* L. (SOFT-RUSH), *J. INFLEXUS* L. (HARD RUSH) AND THEIR INTERSPECIFIC HYBRID *JUNCUS X DIFFUSUS* HOPPE.**

T. O'Mahony, *6 Glenthorn Way, Dublin Hill, Cork City*

#### **ABSTRACT**

The interspecific hybrid, *Juncus x diffusus* Hoppe (= *J. effusus* L. (Soft-rush) x *J. inflexus* L. (Hard Rush)) is of widespread but scarce occurrence in Ireland and the British Isles, and is an unfamiliar plant to many botanists. The present paper reviews the relatively meagre

literature available on this hybrid, and expands on the diagnostic characters given therein for it, on the basis of the author's own recording and experience of this hybrid during the period 1980-2011. As the literature testifies, *seed-sterile* stands of its superficially similar parent, *Juncus inflexus* (Hard Rush), are all too frequently mis-determined as *Juncus x diffusus*. Given that this problem has long bedevilled the accurate recording of the hybrid, a *new* diagnostic character is presented here, that unequivocally distinguishes both taxa.

## INTRODUCTION

Within the genus *Juncus* L. Section *Juncotypus* Buchenau (subgenus *Genuini* Buchenau) as represented in Europe, the interspecific hybrid, *Juncus x diffusus* Hoppe (= *J. effusus* L. (Soft-rush) x *J. inflexus* L. (Hard Rush)) is of widespread, if usually rare, occurrence in calcareous or base-rich paludal habitats throughout mainland Europe, the British Isles, and Ireland. In these islands, the hybrid (which closely resembles *J. inflexus* in visual appearance and in gross morphology) characteristically bears seed-capsules that are *malformed*, shorter than the tepals, and contain *aborted* ovules/seeds (White, 1912; Clifford, 1959; Richards, 1962; O'Mahony, 1986). Moreover, *J. x diffusus* is usually present in very small quantity in any given site (c.1-4 clumps), even when both parents cohabit with it in abundance. These observations strongly suggest that most British and Irish *J. x diffusus* populations are, in fact, morphologically *pauciform*, seed-sterile, F1 hybrid clones.

Nevertheless, this situation is not invariable, for Stace (1975: 461), commenting on *J. x diffusus*, noted: "...seed production is much reduced, but very variable. Well-formed [F1] seeds germinate readily, and F2 generations showing segregation in diagnostic characters, have been raised."

## THE DESCRIPTION OF *J. X DIFFUSUS* IN THE LITERATURE

It seems safe to say that many British and Irish botanists have never seen *Juncus x diffusus* in the wild, and thus are totally unfamiliar with this hybrid – a situation not helped by the fact that literature

descriptions of this hybrid are surprisingly few in number, and often very brief in content. [Note: The terse descriptions of *J. x diffusus* in Sell & Murrell (1996) and Poland & Clement (2009) seem to have been copied uncritically from other works and, therefore, are unenlightening, while Snogerup (1980), in his account of the genus *Juncus* L. for *Flora Europaea* 5, failed to provide a description of *J. x diffusus*, as also did Webb *et al.* (1996), in the 7th edition of the work, *An Irish Flora*.]

In contrast to this situation, James White, in his excellent *Flora of Bristol* (White, 1912), provided a very informative and observant account of *Juncus x diffusus*, which is worth repeating in full here: “I suppose this [*J. x diffusus*] is one of the last plants with which a field botanist gets in touch: yet there is no difficulty in recognizing it [?] when the characters are borne in mind. The stems are rigid, green, with continuous pith, stouter and smoother (much less striate) than those of *J. inflexus*; panicle erect; fruit small, narrow, usually ill-developed. It appears to be absolutely barren: although capsules are formed, they produce no seed. Mr Bucknall did not find a single one fertile in the whole of our gatherings; those capsules which seemed fullest and most promising, contained only a fungoid growth. So far as my experience and information serve, *J. x diffusus* never occurs in large quantity; as a rule, there will be only a single patch of it, even where a large area is overrun with rushes. This fact shows clearly enough that the plant is not propagated by seed.”

Richards (1962), in his critical account of the genus *Juncus* L. for the work, *Flora of the British Isles*, provided the following description of *J. x diffusus*: “Differs from *J. inflexus* in the green, not glaucous, scarcely-grooved stems, with *c.* 18-45 coarse striae; [stem-] pith continuous, or more or less interrupted above. Inflorescence and perianth as in *J. inflexus*. Capsule much shorter than the perianth, with abortive ovules.”

While White (1912) and Perring & Sell (1968) state that *J. x diffusus* is an easily recognized hybrid, many mis-determined voucher specimens purporting to be this hybrid are to be found in the major British Herbaria – a fact that runs totally counter to their assertion. There are two major sources of taxonomic confusion: (1) the

superficially similar visual appearance of *J. inflexus* and *J. x diffusus*; and (2) the common occurrence of *seed-sterile* populations of *J. inflexus* in the wild, which are consistently misidentified as *J. x diffusus*. This latter, ready source of confusion was highlighted by Clifford (1959), but apparently not taken cognisance of by Perring & Sell (1968) in the work, *Critical Supplement to the Atlas of the British Flora*. [Note: Clifford (1959) conducted cultural experiments with ramets of *seed-sterile J. inflexus* plants he collected from the wild: the material that he left exposed to the full effects of the environment, flowered, but did *not* fruit, while the material that he covered with glass-domes at the flowering stage, produced copious, mature capsules with numerous viable seeds that, on sowing, gave rise to typical *J. inflexus* offspring. This experiment conclusively demonstrated that the wild-collected plants were *not* genetically sterile, and therefore he logically concluded that adverse environmental factors (low temperatures at the crucial fruiting-stage?) were responsible for the lack of fruit-development in these plants in the wild.]

Since 1980, the author has recorded some twelve, disjunct, F1 fruit-sterile clonal populations of *J. x diffusus* in Ireland, originating from the vice-counties of East Cork (**H5**), Mid Cork (**H4**), Kilkenny (**H11**) and Limerick (**H8**): all have resembled their *J. inflexus* parent in visual appearance, and in a range of morphological characters – *no* material ever being encountered, that remotely resembled its *J. effusus* parent. Indeed, there appear to be (with one exception) no literature references as to the occurrence of field populations of *J. x diffusus* that visually and morphologically resemble their *J. effusus* parent. The exception is Stace (1975: 461), who made the following comment on *J. x diffusus*: “The variation of the hybrid found in the wild, may be due to the presence of F2s or backcrosses.” There is certainly scope here for fieldwork that would target the detection of F2 segregants, whose morphological/biometric parameters could reasonably be expected to be of wider amplitude.



## THE COMPARATIVE CHARACTERS OF *J. x DIFFUSUS* & *J. INFLEXUS*

[Note: The present account is largely based on the author's fieldwork and microscopic observations, supplemented by literature data.] As stated previously, first-generation hybrids (F1s) of *J. x diffusus* are remarkably similar in visual appearance, and in a range of morphological characters, to their *J. inflexus* parent, each sharing thin, wiry, flexible stems, the stem-sheath unit (consisting of 2 (-3) overlapping scales) being characteristically *glossy purple-black* and *tough-textured* (subcoriaceous) proximally, yet matt, pale-brown and paper-textured (chartaceous) distally. However, in *J. x diffusus* the fresh stems are *dull-green* (not glaucous) with *c.* 18-45 *thin*, feeble, *close-packed* ridges (not 10-18 mostly very prominent, *thick* ridges that are *widely-separated* by deep furrows). [Note: The comparative stem-ridge number range for *J. effusus* is (30-) 35-60 (-70).] Both taxa also share a rather strict, diffuse inflorescence, with wide-spaced flowers, the tepals brownish and with acuminate-subulate apices, the outer (2.5-4 mm long in *J. inflexus*; 2.5-3.2 mm long in *J. x diffusus*) distinctly longer than the inner. In both, the best-developed capsules are characteristically *glossy blackish-brown*, while the three capsule-segments, when opened out, display bluntish apices *with a distinct central arista*, the distal section of the capsule in both taxa thus being *variably contracted into an elongate (sub-aristate) point*. [Note: the capsules of *J. effusus* are broad and *indented* apically, their segment-apices being subtruncate or retuse, and *lacking* a mucro or arista.] In normal-fruited populations of *J. inflexus*, the capsules bear a full complement of viable seeds. In *J. x diffusus*, however, the majority of the F1 hybrid capsules are *deformed*, and shorter than the inner tepals, while the occasional fully-developed hybrid capsule (which equals the inner tepals in length) displays *aborted* ovules/seeds, which are frequently embedded in a pith-like, milk-white, fungal mass (*pers. obs.*, corroborating those of White (1912)).

## Stem-pith Anatomy

In *Juncus effusus*, the peeling away of a vertical strip of stem-epidermis, reveals that the central pith is (with rare exceptions) *entire*, *dense-packed*, and thus *milk-white* in colour to the naked eye (O'Mahony, 2002b). In *J. inflexus*, a vertical stem-section reveals a very distinctive (and diagnostic) *ladder-like* disrupted pith-pattern throughout its length, consisting of air-chambers separated by variably-thick portions of pith. Closer scrutiny shows that this ladder-like pattern is most pronounced and regular in the *distal* 1/2-3/4 of the stem, where the conspicuous air-chambers (occupying the full width of the stem) are *close-packed*, as a consequence of the separating portions of pith being wafer-thin. However, this distinctive pattern tends to break down towards the stem base, where the pith-portions are *much thicker*, the air-chambers consequently being wider apart, and often obscure, smaller, and irregular in shape.

Literature accounts of stem-pith anatomy in *J. x diffusus* seem contradictory. For example, White (1912) and Crackles (1987) reported that their hybrids displayed *entire* pith, whereas Richards (1962) described the nature of the pith in this hybrid as: “..continuous, or more or less interrupted above.” Similarly, Clifford (1959) commented that his wild *J. x diffusus* plants from Co. Durham (v.c.66) displayed an “intermediate” pith-structure. Stace (1975) stated that the stem-pith in *J. x diffusus* “..is continuous, or nearly so..”, but he subsequently (Stace, 2010) modified this statement to read: “ The stems...have more or less continuous pith, often thinly so, or with obscured, discontinuous regions..”.

The author's vertical-sectioning of a range of stems from *single* tussocks of *J. x diffusus*, revealed that there is *considerable variation* in the pattern of the stem-pith anatomy (*pers. obs.*, 1980-2011, based on material from five widely separated hybrid populations from Mid Cork (**H4**), East Cork (**H5**) and Limerick (**H8**)). Thus, some stems displayed *entire* pith in the lower 3/4, while the distal 1/4 showed a *ladder-like* pattern of obscure air-chambers. In others, the obscurely chambered pith was seen to be displaced, randomly, by *entire* sections of pith. And yet in other stems again, *the full length* of the stem displayed a ladder-

like pattern of air-chambers, but these chambers were typically *obscure*, being filled with shreds of pith, whereas in *J. inflexus* the air-chambers (at least in the distal half of the stem) were seen to occupy the full width of the stem (the inner stem-walls being clearly visible, and glistening pearly-white), and so were conspicuous and ‘clean’, as they lacked debris. [Note: If only 1-2 stems are examined from any single, hybrid tussock, then it is very likely that the full range of pith variation in that tussock will not be detected.]

### AN ADDITIONAL DISCRIMINANT CHARACTER FOR *J. x DIFFUSUS*

In *Juncus effusus*, the stem-ridge number ranges from (30-) 35-60 (-70), and in *J. inflexus* from 10-18 (-20). In *J. x diffusus* the corresponding range is 18-45. While there is considerable overlap in range for this character between *J. x diffusus* and *J. effusus*, in practise this is no impediment to their delimitation, as both are visually distinctive taxa, that generally differ in a wide range of other morphological characters, as described previously in this paper. Conversely, while there is no, to little, overlap in this character between *J. x diffusus* and its *J. inflexus* parent, yet it is an uncomfortable closeness, given that both are visually alike, and share a range of morphological features (see earlier detailed notes).

In the course of work towards a taxonomic paper on *Juncus conglomeratus* L. (Compact Rush), *J. effusus* L. (Soft-rush) and their interspecific hybrid, *Juncus x kern-reichgeltii* Jansen & Wachter ex Reichg. (O’Mahony, 2002b), the author discovered a suite of morphological characters that allowed the unequivocal delimitation of these three, superficially similar, seed-fertile taxa. One character in particular (i.e. the *range of means* for the stem-ridge number) proved particularly useful, and gave a reading of 19-21 for *J. conglomeratus*; *c.* 43-52 for *J. effusus*; and *c.* 24-31 for their hybrid, *J. x kern-reichgeltii*, *with no overlap* for this character between all three taxa! The *mean* stem-ridge number itself, was based on a count of just *ten* stems taken from each tussock (a method and number that, by experiment, was found adequate for purpose) – multiple tussocks subsequently being checked to establish the *overall range of means* for each of the three

taxa. The methodology for counting the ridge-numbers on individual stems was simplicity itself: a biro-mark was made between a pair of stem-ridges, roughly 2 cm below the stem-apex (i.e. below its junction with the stem-bract), and the stem was then rotated full-circle (while counting the ridges) back to the biro-mark, under the low power (a fixed x 20 magnification) of a bifocal dissecting microscope.

This methodology was also employed as a discriminant, to confirm the identification of *Juncus x diffusus* populations discovered by the author during the period, 1980-2011, in East Cork (**H5**) (O'Mahony, 1986, 1996, 2002a, 2012); Mid Cork (**H4**) (O'Mahony, 2004); and Co. Limerick (**H8**). The Limerick population (consisting of a c. 2m diameter stand, with at least ten separate tussocks) was found in a marshy, calcareous pasture (with both parents) near Kinteera T-junction (**H8**, R42.23), roughly 2.5 km north of Milford village, on 15th September 2011.

On the basis of stem-ridge measurements made on collected material of *J. x diffusus* and its parents from the above-referenced locations, the *range of means* for the stem-ridge number in all three taxa proved to be: c. 11.4-14.3 for *J. inflexus*; c. 24-31 for *J. x diffusus*; and c. 43-52 for *J. effusus* – once again demonstrating the invaluable usefulness of this discriminant character, there being *no* overlap between the three taxa. Indeed, it is particularly gratifying to note that, with the application of this character, *J. x diffusus* populations can now be separated with absolute confidence from all superficially similar, *fruit-sterile*, populations of *Juncus inflexus*.

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***ERIGERON ANNUUS* (TALL FLEABANE):  
A NEW RECORD FOR OFFALY (H18)**

Fiona Devery, *Emmet Street, Birr, Co. Offaly*

In the summer of 2007 while recording at the Long Derries, Edenderry my attention was drawn to a daisy like flower growing and blending with *Leucanthemum vulgare* (Ox-eye Daisy). The plant keyed out as *Erigeron annuus* (Tall Fleabane), an alien species in the Irish Flora. *E. annuus* was recorded by Bruncker (as *Aster panniculatus*) from Guinness's Brewery, Dublin in 1944 (Reynolds, 2002).

The Long Derries is an interesting site and is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It consists of an old Bord na Mona railway siding on an esker running out on to the bog. The site also contains several sand quarries. The mixture of plants is unusual and includes *Clinopodium acinos* (Basil Thyme), *Erigeron acris* (Blue Fleabane), *Conyza canadensis* (Canadian Fleabane), *Diplotaxis muralis* (Annual Wall Rocket), *Senecio viscosus* (Sticky Groundsel), *Reseda lutea* (Wild Mignonette), *Minuartia hybrida* (Fine-leaved Sandwort) and *Carduus crispus* (Wetted Thistle). The usual esker species are also present such as *Carlina vulgaris* (Carline Thistle), *Thymus polytrichus* (Wild Thyme) and *Centaureum erythraea* (Common Centaury). A little further out a small island of sand in the bog had *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid) and *Dactylorhiza viridis* (Frog Orchid) growing in the smallest forms I have ever seen.

How then did *E. annuus* arrive at the site? It may be a garden escape but the presence of *C. canadensis* and some typical railway aliens suggests a link to the Dublin site, by turf lorry perhaps.

**REFERENCE**

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## ***HORDELYMUS EUROPAEUS* (WOOD BARLEY) IN IRELAND**

Mark Jannink, *Wellingtonia, West Malvern Road, Malvern,  
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*Hordelymus europaeus* was first found in Ireland in 1854 at Mount Merrion in County Dublin (Colgan, 1904). It was originally thought to be native (Moore & More, 1866), but by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it had been re-classified as an introduction, and was ‘still plentiful’ (Colgan & Scully, 1898).

I have not found this location mentioned in any more recent publications, nor is this site mapped in the *Atlas of the British Flora* (Perring & Walters, 1962) or the *New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora* (Preston, Pearman & Dines, 2002).

In 1898 it was discovered at Carnlough, Co. Antrim (Adams, 1899), when there were ‘no more than 5 or 6 tufts of the plant’. It was re-found there by Arthur Stelfox in 1949 (Beesley, 2006), and wasn’t seen again till this year.

In September I visited Cranny Falls, near Carnlough, on the north-east coast of County Antrim. I’d read the account on *H. europaeus* in the *Antrim Rare Plant Register*, and thought it was worth a look. I found a single plant in seed (see back cover), with 4 or 5 non-flowering tufts which are probably this species, in the place indicated in the *ARPR*. They were growing on a ledge on a steep and rather unstable slope, under open scrub with the occasional larger tree. I failed to find any other plants on the banks of the river, either upstream or downstream.

*H. europaeus* is said to prefer chalk or limestone derived soils (Cope & Gray, 2009), although, whilst both these rock formations are present, the plants at Cranny Falls grow on basalt. It may be worth searching the limestone, if any of it has escaped the quarrying activities of the past. As the current colony is so very small, there must be a possibility that it is an outlier of a (formerly) larger population.

# A REPORT ON THE FLORA OF CORK (H3-H5), 2011

Tony O'Mahony, 6 Glenthorn Way, Dublin Hill, Cork City

## INTRODUCTION

Fieldwork within Co. Cork in 2011 was considerably restricted, due to a combination of circumstances. Nevertheless, routine updating of plant-rarities throughout Cork City and county was still undertaken, while productive work on a range of ongoing taxonomic projects was accomplished, though these latter are not alluded to in this current report.

Undoubtedly, the *major* botanical event of 2011, was the December publication of the booklet, *Supplement to the Wild Plants of Sherkin, Cape Clear, and adjacent Islands of West Cork* (Akeroyd, Wolstenholme & Poole, 2011) (available from Sherkin Island Marine Station at a cost of just €5 Euro (P & P)). Appropriately, this booklet is dedicated to the memory of the late Maura J.P. Scannell (1924-2011) – an extraordinary woman of multiple talents; a colossus in Irish botanical circles over many decades, and a very generous facilitator and mentor to young, emerging botanical novices, who contacted her, or visited her at her place of work – the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin – from which venue she retired in early 1990.

The *Supplement* is an excellent publication, in that it updates and expands on the data presented in the original book (Akeroyd *et al.* 1996), adds new plant finds, and thus provides a more complete and contemporary account of the truly remarkable flora of this region of southwest Ireland. A sample of the many interesting plant records to be found in this booklet, includes:

*Stellaria neglecta* (Greater Chickweed) from Spanish Island; a species virtually absent in Co. Cork and southern Ireland in general.

*Fumaria purpurea* (Purple Ramping-fumitory); a nationally scarce species, now recorded from Sherkin, Long, and Horse islands,



and also stated to occur near Goleen and Crookhaven, on the mainland of the nearby Mizen Peninsula.

*Lathyrus japonicus* (Sea Pea); another national rarity, now recorded from Castle, Heir, Skeam East and Jeremy islands.

*Trifolium ornithopodioides* (Bird's-foot Clover); has its southern-Irish headquarters in this area, being recorded from Sherkin, Cape Clear and Heir islands, in addition to nearby sites at Baltimore harbour and Ringarogy Island.

*Tuberaria guttata* (Spotted Rock-rose); this floral 'jewel in the crown' of SW Cork, is reported from East Calf, Long, Castle and Heir islands, and is noted to also occur further west on Bere Island (opposite Castletownbere village) – a considerable extension of its range in this region. (I have no doubt but that this charming annual species will be found in other West Cork locations in future years.)

*Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid) was added to the flora of the islands in 2007, with its discovery near Cow Strand, Sherkin.

*Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting) (a rare and very localised Cork species, predominantly confined in the county to montane habitats in West Cork) is belatedly included in the flora of Sherkin (first found here in 1985) having been inadvertently omitted from *The Wild Plants of Sherkin, Cape Clear and adjacent islands of West Cork* (Akeroyd 1996).

*Rumex pulcher* (Fiddle Dock). This extremely rare and localised Irish species, is now recorded from both Sherkin and Heir islands (an update for Heir, where it was last seen in 1902!). On Sherkin, Fiddle Dock is involved in the parentage of two interspecific hybrids: *R. conglomeratus* (Clustered Dock) x *R. pulcher* (= *R. x muretii*), and *R. crispus* (Curled Dock) x *R. pulcher* (= *R. x pseudopulcher*), this latter hybrid being otherwise only recorded from Co. Wexford. Moreover, the hybrid, *R. conglomeratus* (Clustered Dock) x *R. obtusifolius* (Broad-leaved Dock) (= *R. x abortivus*) is also reported from Sherkin. While

this appears to be its first Co. Cork record, this interspecific hybrid is of very scattered occurrence in Ireland, but overlooked.

Of rare annual species (inhabiting arable and ruderal habitats) reported in the *Supplement*, *Valerianella dentata* (Narrow-fruited Cornsalad) was refound on Sherkin, with records of *Anthemis arvensis* (Corn Chamomile) from Cape Clear and Sherkin, and *Anthemis cotula* (Stinking Chamomile) noted from Cape Clear, Sherkin and Horse islands. *Euphorbia exigua* (Dwarf Spurge) is reported in very small quantity from Horse Island – a species now of very rare occurrence throughout Co. Cork, while the equally rare *Silene gallica* (Small-flowered Catchfly) was recorded from Horse Island in 2008 – an unusual colour-variant, suspected to have been introduced in commercial wildflower seed.

With regard to the widespread weed, *Anagallis arvensis* (Scarlet Pimpernel), the blue-petalled var. *azurea* is present on Cape Clear (possibly its only Co. Cork site), while the lilac-flowered var. *lilacina* occurs on Sherkin (the *Supplement* contains a nice photograph of this taxon) and may well be new to the Irish Flora.

Lastly, the *Supplement* reports the arrival and naturalisation of *Azolla filiculoides* (Water Fern) and *Gunnera tinctoria* (Giant Rhubarb) on Sherkin. From an environmental standpoint, this is a worrying development, as both are notoriously rampant alien species that downgrade the quality of any habitat they invade. In particular, the establishment of *G. tinctoria* by Lough Ordree (a deliberate planting?), is to be deplored, and every effort should be made to eradicate this species here, before it destroys this important wetland habitat.

Throughout 2011, many Cork City sites were revisited, to update records for the interspecific rose hybrid, *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *R. x suberecta*) and the annual species, *Veronica polita* (Grey Field-speedwell), *Veronica crista-galli* (Crested Field-speedwell), *Geranium rotundifolium* (Round-leaved Crane's-bill), *G. pusillum* (Small-flowered Crane's-bill) and *Geranium purpureum* (Little Robin), conservation fruit stocks (mericarps) of the latter species being

collected from a number of threatened sites. The adventive *Geranium pusillum* is currently recorded from three hectads in Cork City, and new 1-km sites (within these hectads) for this distinctive species continue to accrue. For instance, in April 2011 it was found on the periphery of the playing pitch at the junction of Tramore Road and Lower Friars Walk (H4, W67.69), where it cohabits with *Geranium rotundifolium* and *Veronica crista-galli* (other sections of this pitch-margin support populations of *Veronica polita* and *Veronica filiformis* (Slender Speedwell)). Also in April, *G. pusillum* was confirmed to occur on the seaward embankment adjacent to Blackrock Castle (H4, W72.71) (bordering the car park of the subcoastal amenity walkway), where I had provisionally recorded this species in December 2010, identification at that late date being based solely on leaf-petiole indumentum characters – which I find to be a totally reliable discriminant for this species. In June, *G. pusillum* was also recorded on grassy strips bordering the junction of Ringmahon Road/Ballinure Road (H4, W71.71), Cork City.

On 23 March, a hedgerow of planted *Prunus cerasifera* (Cherry Plum) was seen in flower on the Kiln Road, near Blackstone Bridge (H4, W65.74), Cork City. Cherry Plum is new to the Cork City flora and, to date, has only been recorded from a handful of Co. Cork sites, it being essentially replaced in this county, by hedgebanks of the long-naturalised *Prunus domestica* (Wild Plum).

On 21 April, while on a family spin, *Veronica crista-galli* (Crested Field-speedwell) was seen to occur in local abundance on grassy roadside margins from Cross Barry (H4, W55.61) on the R589, southwest to Bandon town, and thence westwards (on the R586) to Enniskean (H3, W35.54) and Dunmanway town (H3, W23.40) – a vast stretch of roadside margin, from which I have known this species since the 1980s.

On 23 April, while driving on the R619 from Coachford village northwards to Larchfield Crossroads, Marie O'Mahony spotted a tiny flowering stand of *Primula veris* (Cowslip) on a roadside embankment (H4, W46.74). On checking this population, I found it to consist of six

plants of *P. veris* (four functionally male plants, and two functionally female plants) cohabiting with a single female plant of the hybrid, *P. veris* x *P. vulgaris* (Primrose) (= *P. x polyantha*). I first recorded this hybrid (in association with both parents) in this general area in 1978, but the old species-rich pastures in which it occurred have long since been ploughed and turned into biodiversity-barren, monocultures of *Lolium perenne* (Perennial Rye-grass) cultivar strains. Hopefully, more detailed fieldwork in this general area in future years' will reveal other remnant populations of *P. veris* and *P. x polyantha*. As I have stated in previous yearly reports, *P. veris* was a characteristic, locally frequent, and beautiful adornment to many Cork City and county ancient, plant-rich grasslands, up to 1980. However, major infrastructural developments in Cork City and its hinterland from that date onwards, gradually eliminated most of its old-pasture sites. In tandem with this development, the radical (and environmentally inimical) agricultural changes set in train in the years' following on the Irish Republic's admission to the EU (then the EEC) in the 1970s, effectively eliminated the vast majority of these Co. Cork habitats and their attendant biodiversity. This negative environmental sea-change, particularly impacted on counties with large dairy-herds, such as Co. Cork, as the establishment of high-quality *Lolium/Trifolium* grasslands for dairy cows, was a major priority and directive from the EEC.

The mid-April to mid-May period provides a major visual floral spectacle in Co. Cork and southwest Ireland in general, where, in acidic hedgebanks and woodland-fringes, cohabiting stands of *Euphorbia hyberna* (Irish Spurge) and *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell) occur in local abundance, in association with *Primula vulgaris* (Primrose), Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria verna* s.l.), Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*) and Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*) etc.

On 1st May, the long-naturalised populations of *Erinus alpinus* (Fairy Foxglove) on the northern roadside walls adjoining Ballyhooly Bridge (H5, W72.98) on the River Blackwater, were seen in late-flower. Over the years, the tiny (wind-blown?) seeds of this attractive alpine species have been distributed downriver, and small satellite

populations are now established on limestone outcrops on the left bank of the river, where I first recorded them in 1992.

On 20 May, *Saxifraga spathularis* (St Patrick's-cabbage) was seen in beautiful flower on sandstone outcrops bordering the R618 at Oak Grove (H4, W42.73), near Carrigadrohid bridge, where I first recorded this population in 1978. *S. spathularis* is near its eastern limit of distribution in Co. Cork on the Old Red Sandstone outcrops at Carrigadrohid, and this area (H4, W41.72) supports important local populations of this delightful species.

On 26 May, John Doyle kindly provided me with a new East Cork site for *Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid): on the margins of a sliproad (H5, W80.72) of the N25 (Cork-Youghal road), shortly west of Carrigtohill village. During the period 2009-2011, John has noted this stand of Bee Orchid to fluctuate from 9-18 plants. This habitat falls within an area known as the South Cork Limestone Syncline: a linear, west-east aligned, narrow strip of carboniferous limestone. A c. 62 km long section of this syncline (from Ballincollig town Regional Park (H4, W57.70) eastwards almost to the coastal town of Youghal, on the East Cork/Waterford border) is species-rich, and supports most of Co. Cork's calcicole plant rarities, including other populations of Bee Orchid (O'Mahony, 2009).

On 31 May, preliminary botanical work was undertaken at Ring Beach (H5, X06.71), Ballymacoda, which occupies the southern section of Youghal Bay. In the 1870s, the Rev Thomas Allin (Allin, 1883) noted the nationally rare maritime annual, *Trifolium scabrum* (Rough Clover) to occur in abundance on the sandhills bordering the mouth of the tidal Womanagh River, which bisects the northern/southern sections of Youghal Bay. This is the only recorded Co. Cork locality for this clover, though it has not been seen here, apparently, since 1900. In the early-1970s, Maura Scannell recorded populations of *Salsola kali* (Saltwort), and of the nationally scarce *Cuscuta epithymum* (Dodder), from this beach area. [Note: In Britain and Ireland, *Cuscuta epithymum* occurs in two highly contrasting habitats: calcareous grasslands and coastal dunes on the one hand, and calcifuge grasslands and heaths on

the other. In Ireland, the majority of its very disjunct populations are associated with calcareous coastal dunes.]

On the present, early visit, the laneway leading down to Ring Beach, at Ballymacoda, produced a single tree of *Acer campestre* (Maple) – an alien of surprising rarity in Co. Cork hedgebanks. A west-east aligned impounded marsh at the rear of the beach, held an abundance of *Carex riparia* (Greater Pond-sedge), a sedge that forms extensive, subdominant monocultures in widely scattered coastal freshwater marshes in Co. Cork. Paludal ground on the margins of the marsh held populations of flowering *Veronica catenata* (Pink Water-speedwell) and *Myosotis laxa* (Tufted Forget-me-not). The crumbling stretch of clayey cliffs that intervene between the laneway termination and the beach proper, was found to hold an extensive population of *Helminthotheca echioides* (Bristly Oxtongue), a visually distinctive archeophyte of very local occurrence in Ireland, but with some major sites in Co. Cork (e.g. Cork City, Cork Harbour, Ballycotton Bay and the present Ballymacoda site). *H. echioides* was accompanied by flowering populations of *Brassica nigra* (Black Mustard), *Sinapis alba* (White Mustard) and *Sinapis arvensis* (Charlock), together with intermixed stands of *Equisetum telmateia* (Great Horsetail) and *E. arvense* (Field Horsetail). On the beach itself, the best and most unexpected find of the day, was two vegetative clumps of the maritime, rhizomatous grass species, *Leymus arenarius* (Lyme-grass), a vigorous, attractive plant of very local distribution in Ireland, and previously only known in Co. Cork from nearby Ballycotton Bay (**H5**, W9.6), where it was found by the author in 1981 (T.O. Mahony 1986, *Ir. Nat. J.* **22** (1): 40-43). It is tempting to speculate that this as yet tiny *L. arenarius* population at Ring Strand, was derived from vegetative drift-material from Ballycotton Bay. In any event, mapping its rate of spread at Ring Strand in the years ahead, should prove a most interesting study.

The dominant grass species on the dunes were *Elytrigia atherica* (Sea Couch) and *Festuca rubra* s.l. (Red Fescue), with local populations of *Trisetum flavescens* (Yellow Oat-grass) and *Ononis repens* (Common Restharrow). In the event, none of the targeted species were refound on this early visit in overcast, chilly weather,

though future visits to this area at different times of the year, will hopefully prove more productive. There seemed to be very little open ground for the establishment of annual species here, save for the linear, slightly eroded microhabitats provided by informal pathways that meander across the flat dunes.

On 9 June, the attractive annual adventive, *Erigeron annuus* (Tall Fleabane) was refound in its 2009 wasteland site, in the grounds of Cork City's Lee Road waterworks (H4, W64.71). Two budding plants of this species were uprooted with ease, and subsequently potted-up at home, and these flowered prolifically up until November 2011.

On the 10 June, a few mature achenes of *Ranunculus parviflorus* (Small-flowered Buttercup) were collected as a conservation stock, from its waste ground site at Vicars Crossroads (H4, W66.69), Togher, Cork City, where I reinstated this annual adventive to the Cork Flora in April 2007. [Note: A postcard from Pat Dunne on 24 May, informed me of his find of *Ranunculus parviflorus* (many plants) in arable ground at Robert's head, (H4, W783.542), overlooking Robert's Cove – only the second recent Co. Cork record for this nationally extremely rare species. This welcome find effectively bridges the long time-span since R.W. Scully's *R. parviflorus* record from the same coastal site in June 1899, viz.: "In cultivated land near Robert's Head." (R.W. Scully 1899, *Irish Naturalist* 8: 181-182).] A delightful surprise on this day, in the same area, was the discovery of a large population of naturalised *Inula helenium* (Elecampagne) on the left bank of the railed-in Glasheen Stream (H4, W65.69), near a footbridge that connects the Deanrock and Summerstown housing estates, at Togher. [Note: This strip of unkempt streamside grassland was subsequently cut by Cork City Council, and only 3-4 plants of *I. helenium* were left intact! Given that this site represents one of only two known Cork City locations for this nationally scarce, long established medicinal plant, I intend to liaise with the city council, to ensure the future protection of both of its city populations.]

On 18 July, a few hours' spent in a working sand-quarry (H5, W81.71) near Millaun, Carrigtohill, Cork Harbour, proved very

rewarding. On previous visits to this site in other years', I had recorded naturalised *Oenothera glazioviana* (Large-flowered Evening-primrose) as occurring here in abundance, and this biennial continues to thrive and spread here, while the very local *Verbena officinalis* (Vervain) was also in flower, and quite frequent, as was *Verbascum thapsus* (Great Mullein). The neat, gravelly embankments bordering the main site-entrance, exhibited delightful, cohabiting populations of flowering *Mentha arvensis* (Corn Mint) (functionally-female plants), *Silene vulgaris* (Bladder Champion) and the annuals, *Blackstonia perfoliata* (Yellow-wort) and *Centaurium erythraea* (Common Centaury). The second quarry (on the northern side of the roadway, opposite the main entrance gate) added to the list of interesting finds, a pool-margin producing fruiting *Veronica catenata* (Pink Water-speedwell), the adjoining gravelly substrate with flowering populations of the nationally rare *Kickxia elatine* (Sharp-leaved Fluellen). The most interesting discovery, however, proved to be *Filago minima* (Small Cudweed), which occurred here in some abundance – a national rarity, with extremely few known extant Co. Cork sites.

On 23 August, the Blackrock Castle amenity walkway site (**H4**, W72.71) for the naturalised annual, *Lathyrus nissolia* (Grass-vetchling) (originally found here in June 2009), was revisited. This beautiful species was found to be more widespread in its paludal meadow habitat than previous searches had suggested. The only other obviously introduced species to occur with it, was flowering *Trifolium hybridum* (Alsike Clover) – a scarce plant, and of predominantly casual occurrence, in Co. Cork. [**Note:** In contrast to the blissfully sweet-scented flower heads of *Trifolium repens* (White Clover) and, to a lesser extent, those of *T. pratense* (Red Clover), those of *T. hybridum* have a *unique* (shoepolish-like?) odour as far as clover species go, in my experience.]

On 15 September, Milford village (close to the Limerick (**H8**) border) was visited, to check up on the extensive roadside-ditch (**H4**, R42.21 & R41.20) population of *Mentha x piperita* (Peppermint) found here in September 2002. The population proved to be in fresh flower, the leaves, on crushing, emitting their characteristic, head-clearing,



pungent scent. The beautiful *Pimpinella major* (Greater Burnet-saxifrage) occurred in the roadside hedgebanks in abundance (now mostly out of flower), this being *the* characteristic umbellifer of calcareous roadsides and hedgebanks in north Cork and Limerick, and a delightful component of the flora of this extensive region. The rose-rich hedgebanks here, hold an abundance of *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose), *R. corymbifera* (Hairy Dog-rose), *R. canina* (Dog-rose), together with the interspecific hybrid crosses, *R. canina* x *R. tomentosa* (= *R. x scabriuscula*) and *R. stylosa* (Short-styled Field-rose) x *R. canina* (= *R. x andegavensis*). A small stand of naturalised *Ribes rubrum* (Red Currant) also occurred on a section of hedgebank. A subsequent stop was made at the Cross-of-the-lane junction (H4, R42.19) on the Dromcolliher road (R522), to the south of Milford village. The hedgebanks of the minor, interconnecting road to Milford Castle, were then examined. These proved rose-rich, and yielded: *Rosa tomentosa*, *R. arvensis* (Field-rose), *R. canina* and *R. corymbifera*, in addition to the hybrid crosses, *R. x scabriuscula* and *R. sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *R. x suberecta*). Intermixed populations of *Equisetum telmateia* (Giant Horsetail) and *E. arvense* (Field Horsetail) formed dense, hazy drifts along the damp, base-rich roadside margins. Also present, were stands of fruit-bearing *Prunus domestica* (Wild Plum) and occasional bushes of *Prunus cerasus* (Dwarf Cherry).

On 26 October, an afternoon trip was made to the right bank of the River Awbeg, upriver of Castletownroche Bridge, and immediately downriver of the boundary-wall of Anne's Grove demesne. The objective was to hopefully refind the population of the interspecific hybrid, *Juncus x diffusus* (= *J. effusus* (Soft-rush) x *J. inflexus* (Hard Rush)) that I had added to the Cork Flora from this site in 1980 (T. O'Mahony 1986, *Ir. Nat. J.* **22** (1): 40-43). Wet weather, and a shortage of time, allowed only a very brief examination of the site; nevertheless, some ten tussocks of *J. x diffusus* were refound, amidst an abundance of both parents. Material of all three taxa was then collected, for a comparison of diagnostic characters and of biometric measurements, following on microscope work to be undertaken later at home. These

River Awbeg inundation-meadows still support large, cohabiting stands of *Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge) and *Carex riparia* (Greater Pond-sedge), this latter species being of very localised occurrence in *inland* Cork sites.

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## TWO *RUBUS* CITED IN THE FLORA OF COUNTY WATERFORD (H6) – RENAMED

Paul R. Green, *Yoletown, Ballycullane, New Ross, Co. Wexford*

*Rubus Pyramidalis* – disused railway, Dungarvan (X26.93, 2006, BSBI field meeting, **BM**) – specimen has been renamed as *R. prolongatus* by D.E. Allen.

*Rubus hesperius* – bank of disused railway, Dungarvan (X26.93, 2006, BSBI field meeting, **BM**) – specimen has been renamed as *R. criniger* by D.E. Allen.

Both are new county records.

**BM** = cited specimens deposited in the British Museum (Natural History), London.

## RECORDING IN WEXFORD (H12), 2011

Paul R. Green, *Yoletown, Ballycullane, New Ross, Co. Wexford*

2011 has been surprisingly productive as I had not realised so many records had been collected until I checked my database for the total in December: 18,214 records of which just under half were made by me, the rest coming from recording with others or from individuals. Paula O'Meara was the largest contributor, sending her records in via Mapmate. It is so nice not to have to sit and enter the records up myself. When Paula showed me a photo of Meadow Barley at Kilmannock (S70.15) I got very excited as the meadow looked un-grazed, because each time I had visited the site before, the cattle had over-grazed it. Visiting the site together we found the *Hordeum secalinum* (Meadow Barley) in abundance and the species I had looked for many times before *Carex divisa* (Divided Sedge) in the thousands, it was great to see that sedge at last. Paula's *Veronica peregrina* (American Speedwell) from the boundary bank of the GAA pitch at Ballyfarnoge (S71.18) is only the second record for the county. *Claytonia sibirica* (Pink Purslane) from the graveyard at Ballykeeroge is the third record for the county; here it grew on the ditch around the graveyard and on a few graves. Zoë Devlin also sent records in via Mapmate. Her *Symphytum* x *hidcotense* (Hidcote Comfrey) from a road bank at Rosegarland (S85.16) was a new county record. Frankie Tennant and Roy Watson always give me a large pile of recording cards they have filled in from around the county. One of their favourite sites in the county is the disused railway station at Killinick (T05.13), a rich site with several orchid species and a number of other interesting species including: *Orobanche minor* (Common Broomrape), *Tragopogon pratensis* (Goat's-beard) and *Trifolium campestre* (Hop Trefoil). The other large contributor was the Wexford Naturalists' Field Club; they gave me plant lists made on several of their field excursions.

My first productive day out was on 2 March, a stunningly beautiful sunny day in the Enniscorthy area while waiting to pick a friend up from the station. The first stop was to see if I could find Stinking Iris at Ballycarney (S96.48) which Ro FitzGerald had recorded

in 1991, not a difficult task as Ro had seen several clumps in the churchyard where the iris was easily found. The first good find of the day was one plant of *Artemisia absinthium* (Wormwood) on top of a stone gate pillar to the church car park; the first county record since 1976. A visit to the ruins of a castle at Mackmine (S97.32) produced the first new county record of the year; *Crocus vernus* (Spring Crocus) by the thousands, masses of large patches of purple. For a non-native species it certainly was beautiful. The crocus was in a very wide hedge dividing two fields and in the wood below the castle. In the wet woodland below the castle was one clump of *Leucojum aestivum* (Summer Snowflake), not quite in flower and as hard as I looked I could not find any other clumps. The snowflake has been known in this area since 1897 when found by E.S. Marshall. More snowflake hunting was done on the 20 March at Rosegarland (S85.15) in wet woodland, a site I had no record of until Dominic Berridge told me about it, known here for at least fifteen years. Dominic was concerned it may have been destroyed as some tree clearing had been done. How wrong he was! It was there by the thousands if not the millions, a beautiful spectacle on both sides of the Corock River. Some of this woodland was extremely wet and not safe to walk in. On the gravel drive leading up to the house of Rosegarland I started counting the rosettes of *Ranunculus parviflorus* (Small-flowered Buttercup); at two-hundred I gave up.

The 8 June, the dunes at Cahore (T22.46) were my destination to look for *Asparagus prostratus* (Wild Asparagus). There was a large new house on the crest of the dunes in the area, my diagram showed me where I should be looking. I had almost given up looking as the scrub had become too dense to walk any further, turned around and there, amongst a small open area of ivy, were two asparagus stems. The unstable face of the dune had sixteen more stems. This small population survived the new development by less than ten metres. Naturalised amongst the scrub were scattered bushes of *Daphne laureola* (Spurge Laurel).

On 10 June in New Ross (S71.27), I was passing a small area of rough ground which was a thicket of sycamore until clear felled the

previous year, when I realised it was now covered with *Campanula trachelium* (Nettle-leaved Bellflower). As it is a native further up the River Barrow, it would be nice to think it was native dormant seed waiting for disturbance to germinate. The following morning, I went for a pre breakfast walk along the banks of the River Barrow at Ballynacoolagh (S73.34), to see if I could find more bellflowers, as it is very frequent south of the stretch I walked along, unfortunately I had no success this time. A very dense thicket of willows are in the wetter areas joining the river and the drier slopes are herb rich mixed woodland. *Crepis paludosa* (Marsh Hawk's-beard), a rare species in the county, was in the damper areas. *Orobanche hederæ* (Ivy Broomrape) was abundant wherever ivy was growing. As the woodland became very steep and rocky Tunbridge Filmy-fern popped into my head as I had seen it up river in the same habitat in Co. Carlow in 2007. It was not long before a patch of *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense* was found. By now the slope had become too steep to go any further; I made my way to the top of the slope, went to leave the wood, got caught on a tree root, fell out of the wood onto a very large tree root and cracked a rib. In extreme pain I tried to take the easiest route back to the car. Maybe because I was driving slower than normal, there on the west bank of the R729 I noticed a patch of *Inula helenium* (Elecampane), found in the area in 1991 by Ro FitzGerald. I had looked for it several times before without success, this was the medicine I needed to keep me going on my journey home.

The 19 August took me over to the east coast to do some paid survey work. Seeing a blue flower from the car at Ballina (T08.27) I pulled over and as expected it was the beautiful *Nicandra physalodes* (Apple-of-Peru), another new alien for the county. One of my stops was at Glascarrig Point (T21.49) to look for *Arctium lappa* (Greater Burdock) known from this area since 1961 when found by F.W. Simpson and seen here in 1991 by Ro FitzGerald. The burdock was abundant in two sandy fields, apart from being rather short, only about one metre high, it seemed a good match for this species.

As I had seen *Carex divisa* the day before with Paula O’Meara I thought I would try my luck on 22 August at another known site, Pilltown (S69.18) where there is a herb rich meadow by the river. Like last time when I looked here I had no luck. The meadow had not been grazed. *Bromus commutatus* (Meadow Brome) was here, the only current extant site in the county and the field hedges in this area are filled with trees of various sizes of *Sorbus devoniensis* (Devon Whitebeam) and *S. hibernica* (Irish Whitebeam), both species fruiting very well.

Megan Morris joined me for a walk along the Owenduff River by Tayorstown Bridge (S82.14) on 11 September. *Brachypodium pinnatum* (Heath False-brome) was found in scattered patches along the wooded banks of the river north and south of the bridge. The highlight for me was finding six plants of *Centunculus minimus* (Chaffweed) in a muddy gateway between two fields, a species I have only seen along the western coast of Ireland before. Megan was amused that I could be so excited about finding such a small dull looking plant. We visited The Hollow (pub) (S75.10) for our evening meal, in the flower tubs on the window sill was *Galinsoga quadriradiata* (Shaggy-soldier) a new alien species for the county. Several of the local botanists went to have a look. One of the pleasures of botany is telling others of your finds!

Seeing many clumps of *Ficaria verna* (Lesser Celandine) flowering vigorously on a road bank by Moore’s Cross Roads (S80.30), on the 26 November, rounded the year off nicely.

## **SOME NOTES FROM OFFALY (H18)**

Fiona Devery, *Emmet St. Birr, Co. Offaly*

A visit by Judith Allinson to the Slieve Blooms in 2008 produced a record for *Carex pallescens* (Pale Sedge) from Coolecree, Cadamstown. This is most probably the old R.L. Praeger record (1901) for *C. pallescens* “above Cadamstown”. Judith also recorded the scarce sedge *C. limosa* (Bog-sedge) from an area of fen at Killaun, Birr (N10.05).

In 2009 on a walk with the Offaly Naturalists Field Club I found a second site for *C. pallescens* on the Coillte Life Project (Alluvial Woodland Regeneration) site (N21.04) above Kinnitty.

Then in 2011 while checking a *Neottia nidus-avis* (Bird's-nest Orchid), site at Drumakeenan Wood (S11.91) (7 spikes present), I was surprised to see several clumps of *C. pallescens* at the edge of a track that I have walked many times! Is it on the move? All three sites belong to Coillte.

A sortie to an area of cleared forestry at Cangort near Shinrone (S04.93) in the south of the county early in 2009, revealed a large population of *C. pillulifera* (Pill Sedge), quite a rare sedge in Offaly. The site also has a good population of *Luzula pilosa* (Hairy-wood Rush), an infrequent rush in the county. Hundreds of primroses and early purple orchids had also taken advantage of the clearing to bloom in abundance.

Late last summer (2011) *C. pillulifera* was also recorded in cleared forestry at Clonbeale near Birr (N09.07) and in forestry in the Slieve Bloom Mountains at Gorteen (S18.92).

While visiting a site for *C. vesicaria* (Bladder-sedge), near Birr (N07.07) in 2010, I passed what seemed to be a clump of *C. echinata* (Star Sedge), but a closer look revealed it to be *C. spicata* (Spiked Sedge). *C. spicata* has a very scattered distribution in Ireland. Also in 2010 I received an interesting record for *Spergularia rubra* (Sand-Spurrey), from Dr John Feehan. It was growing on sand uncovered by Bord na Mona peat cutting at Falsk, Fербane (N10.21).

An early autumn visit to Fin Lough, Clonfinlough (N02.29) in 2009, re-found *C. limosa*, *C. lasiocarpa* (Slender Sedge) and *C. dioica* (Dioecious Sedge), in the fen amongst a very large population of *Equisetum variegatum* (Variegated Horsetail). A large number of *Epipactis palustris* (Marsh Helleborine), (in seed) were also present. The following summer *Dactyloriza traunsteineroides* (Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid), was re-found at the site and a BSBI field meeting that

year brought the count for the site to 10 orchid species and 17 sedge species. In 2011 a specimen of what may be *C. appropinquata* (Fibrous Tussock Sedge), from the site was lodged with the Herbarium in Glasnevin.

In 2008 *C. strigosa* (Thin-spiked Wood-sedge), (not found since pre 1970) and *Elymus caninus* (Bearded Couch), were recorded from Clonad Wood, Tullamore (N32.18). Previously *E. caninus* was recorded from the Camcor River banks around Birr (N05.05) making this a second County Record for Offaly.

While helping the Tidy Towns group in Daingaen (N42.67) in April 2011, I observed a large patch of submerged vegetation in a recently cleared drain near the canal. On climbing down I was surprised and pleased to see that it was *Groenlandia densa* (Opposite-leaved Pondweed), a protected species in Ireland and a new site for the species in Offaly.

## ALIENS

2007: *Erigeron annuus* (Tall Fleabane), was recorded from the Long Derries, Edenderry (N65.29). First County Record.

*Juncus tenuis* (Slender Rush), Glenafelly, Slieve Bloom Mountains (N22.01). First County Record. Edenderry Harbour, (N62.31). Second County Record.

2009: *Pratia pedunculata* (Matted Pratia), was recorded as an accidental introduction in a lawn in Tullamore (N34.25). *Juncus tenuis*, Drumakeenan (S11.91).

2010: *Juncus tenuis*, Falsk, Ferbane, (N11.21).

2011: *Conyza Canadensis* (Canadian Fleabane), from a road verge in Banagher (N00.15), Second County Record.

## REFERENCE

Praeger, R.L. (1901) Irish topographical botany. *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 7:1-410.



## INTERESTING PLANTS IN TYRONE (H36), 2010-11

W.I. McNeill, 86 Fairhill Rd, Cookstown, Co. Tyrone, BT80 8DE

The past two years have seen some good additions to the Tyrone plant-lists, but, as well, I include notes on interesting updates.

### *Claytonia sibirica* (Pink Purslane)

There have been a few records of this plant in Tyrone over the years, but always clearly planted or escaped from gardens, and with no sign of natural colonisation. However, in 2010, I found it strongly naturalised along the Rock River, and followed it for a few km downstream from Slatequarry to Drumballyhugh, about 8km WSW of Cookstown. This same stretch of riverbank holds *Campanula latifolia* (Giant Bellflower), another plant usually classed as an alien in Ireland.

### *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* (Irish Lady's-tresses)

In August 2010, accompanied by Ronnie Irvine, Jim Rutherford, and two local men, Joe and Brendan McKeown, we visited the only recent site in Tyrone for this orchid, at Brookend, on marshland 200m back from the shore of Lough Neagh. I had last seen it here in 2003, and had failed to find it on some visits in more recent years, so it was very pleasing to record 15 flowering spikes. They were growing 200m from any of their previous positions on rather drier ground. We wondered if the recent very wet summers had made earlier positions too waterlogged, and they had decided to 'move home'.

At one stage in the 1920s, there were 5 Tyrone sites for the Lady's-tresses, but, by 1938, it was known only at Brookend. In the early 1940s, it was thought to have died out, and it was not until 30 years later that John Harron re-found it at its Brookend site, and it has been seen on many occasions since.

### *Tellima grandiflora* (Fringecups)

This N American plant is grown in gardens as its lime-green flowers make an excellent foil for strong-coloured plants in flower arrangements. It has escaped into the wild in several places in N Ireland, and is especially fond of riverside woodland. Near Cookstown,

it is abundant along the Killymoon and Ballinderry Rivers downstream from what appears to be the source of the plant at Tullylagan. A few years ago I found a single plant along the Burndennett at Donemana, and wondered would it spread. And indeed it has, for, in May 2011, it was very frequent in the Tullyard area, 2km downstream from Donemana.

*Anchusa arvensis* (Bugloss)

This turned up on dumped material at Kilcronagh, near Cookstown, in September 2010. It was last recorded in the county in 1896.

*Pseudorchis albida* (Small White Orchid)

On June 11 2011, Kevin Johnston and I visited the area around Scraghy, in West Tyrone. The chief purpose of our visit was to check out a site for *Pseudorchis albida*, as this was one of the plants on the BSBI ‘threatened plants’ list for 2011. The site in question consists of two parallel ribs of Carboniferous Sandstone rocks, with many big rocks, 2 to 3 metres high, lying across a west-facing slope. The ground around is acidic, but well supplied with enriching minerals, as it supports Butterfly Orchids, Common and Heath Spotted Orchids, Meadow Thistle etc. After a long search I was on the verge of giving up when Kevin shouted, “What’s this?” He had found a spike of Small White Orchid! I continued the search with renewed vigour, and found three more spikes. This may be now the only site for Small White Orchid in Tyrone. Two other recently known sites on rocky ground a few km NW of Cookstown proved blank in 2011.

*Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort)

While searching for the Small White Orchid at Scraghy, we came across a Moonwort plant. I have seen this delightful and unusual little fern in only two other sites in Tyrone in the last 30 years (near Lough Doo, 13km W of Cookstown, and at Meencarriga, 2km NE of Scraghy).

*Schoenus nigricans* (Black Bog-rush)

About 1km W of Scraghy, at Cushey’s Bridge, Kevin and I found a good colony of Black Bog-rush. This is quite frequent in nearby areas of Co. Donegal, but in recent years we had seen it in Tyrone only at a

site W of Lough Lee – this is about 3.5km NE of Scraghy. It would appear that Black Bog-rush has just recently arrived at Cushey's Bridge, as we had botanised there before on a couple of occasions and had not seen it – it would not be easily missed. Later in 2011, Ian Rippey reported it, giving a grid-reference 200m or so upstream from Cushey's Bridge.

*Lepidium virginicum* (Least Pepperwort)

On June 8 2011, I was stopped at traffic lights in Cookstown, and noticed a Pepperwort – looking plant growing by the edge of the footpath. Later I collected a small piece of it and despatched it to Tim Rich, who declared it to be *L. virginicum*. This is certainly a first for Co. Tyrone – maybe for Ireland?

*Epilobium* hybrid (Willow-herb)

I came across a rather different-looking Willow-herb on Castle Road, Cookstown on July 23 2011, and sent a specimen off to T.D. Pennington, the *Epilobium* specialist at Kew. He said it was a hybrid, of uncertain parentage, but probably *E. ciliatum* x *E. obscurum*. As both *E. ciliatum* and *E. obscurum* occurred nearby, this identification is likely to be correct.

*Solidago gigantea* (Early Goldenrod)

A handsome Goldenrod plant, seen at Curran, on the shoreline of Lough Neagh, on July 31 2011, keyed out using Stace (2010) as *S. gigantea*. In earlier years, I would have presumed garden escapes of Goldenrod were all *S. canadensis*, but I now know to think again. Of course, it is probably a garden cultivar with close affinity to *S. gigantea* rather than genuine species *S. gigantea*.

*Chaenorhinum minus* (Small Toadflax)

On August 3 2011 I was in the Rakeeranbeg area, a few km SE of Dromore (Co. Tyrone), and, as I parked the car by the roadside, I noticed a pile of coarse builders' rubble dumped in a field alongside the road. There were a few plants growing on the dumped material, and I thought, from a distance, that they would be common weeds. But they turned out to be mostly *Chaenorhinum minus*, indeed as many as 50

small plants of this species. I had seen only two or three plants in the previous 30 years in Tyrone, and now suddenly I had 50 at one site. They were growing on most inhospitable material, mostly mortar, interspersed with large chunks of concrete block!

*Elaeagnus umbellata* (Spreading Oleaster)

In early September 2011, I was botanising in the Ballygowan area, 2km W of Omagh, and looking at a patch of weedy waste ground. In one area *Salix cinerea* (Grey Willow) had formed a scrubby thicket. I was ignoring this area until I saw a more handsome bush among the willows. I still thought it was a willow –the leaves were distinctly willow-like, but bright and shiny olive-green, and not dull like the Grey Willow. However, when I saw a few small waxy cream flowers and a small red/black berry, I knew it wasn't a willow, but what on earth was it? I sent a specimen off to the Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh, and they came back with *Elaeagnus umbellata*. A beautiful bush, well worth a place in someone's garden – from whence, presumably, it had originated.

*Polypogon viridis* (Water Bent)

I had just parked my car near the Library in Cookstown when I noticed a couple of small grass plants at the foot of a wall. A few years ago I had come across *Polypogon viridis* in the Cathedral area of Belfast, so I immediately recognised it. This grass has been spreading on waste ground and streetside habitats in many parts of the British Isles in recent years. Nice to welcome it to Cookstown!

**REFERENCE**

Stace, C. (2010) *New Flora of the British Isles* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed) Cambridge University, Cambridge.

**CO. DOWN (H38) RECORDING IN 2011**

Graham Day, 11 Ballyhaft Road, Newtownards, Co. Down

Monthly field meetings were organised in support of the second year of recording for the proposed flora of Co. Down, and to make

records under the new date-class. The meetings were initially well supported, but had few attendees during the later part of the year. Thanks go to Margaret Marshall, Roger Field and Mark Wright who sent records to me.

**NMW** = cited specimens deposited in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.

Several visits were made along the outer Ards peninsula in early April to record *Cochlearia* spp. and while at Cloghy, *Stellaria pallida* was re-found at its first recorded site in Co. Down. In late April, I made a visit to Kearney. To the north of the village there was a track, running past Stinking Port - a name richly deserved due to the overpowering, pungent smell of flowering *Smyrniium olusatrum*. Further on, there were shallow brackish pools with *Hippurus vulgaris* which are likely to yield further species on a future visit.

In mid-April, six attended the first of the monthly field meetings at Ballyquintin at the southern-most tip of the Ards peninsula. Here, much of the agricultural land is now owned by the National Trust, which on taking over appeared to have changed the husbandry of the fields. However, when we visited, previously ‘good’ fields had become virtually weed-free. A very small area had been left close to the old coastguard look-out, and here a wide range of species was found.

A walk along the roadside near Holy Wells, north of Ballyquintin, produced less than eighty species – poor for Down - and looking into adjacent fields was also unproductive as these were almost completely weed-free. The ditch running beside the road was best, a view seemingly agreed with by the local badgers which had dug a sett in the bank and undermined the road.

Roger Field recorded eleven very small *Botrychium lunaria* plants at a single station at Murlough in late April. He also found *Viola canina*, *Myosotis ramosissima* and *Erophila glabrescens*.

Four attended the second monthly meeting at Hollymount NNR in mid-May. *Hottonia palustris* was re-found, but it was still to flower and was only re-found with some difficulty due to marshy ground, scrubby trees and the spring growth of herbs. Any later and passage would have been too difficult. Paul Hackney remarked that he probably wouldn't have found it without a GPS position!

Over two hundred species were recorded on a very pleasant walk on newly developed access paths at Sketrick in late May, a number swollen by numerous introductions including planted *Gunnera tinctoria*.

The Belfast Harbour Estate was visited in mid-June to record *Ophrys apifera* growing on land-fill by Heron Road. *Dactylorhiza purpurella* and *D. fuchsii* were also noted.

Roger Field sent records of *Glaucium flavum* and a much reduced population of a single plant of *Mertensia maritima* at Portmore, south of Bloody Bridge, in mid-June. He commented that the beach was being grazed by sheep again, and said that he had previously seen sheep selectively grazing *Mertensia* at this site.

*Alchemilla filicaulis* and *Dactylorhiza purpurella* were recorded at the Scrabo quarries in late June, but parts are becoming overgrown by mature trees, mostly sycamore, and it was not possible to re-find the population of *D. purpurella* in the north quarry, so this has probably gone.

BSBI had requested that historical records of *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* be checked, but all searches were fruitless. The first, at Ballyalloy Lough, where several interesting records were made by Praeger, is now mostly taken over by reed-mace and taller sedges, and has very small suitable areas of open water. It was absent too from Derryboy Lough in late July. *Berula erecta*, *Spirodela polyrhiza*, *Lemna minuta* and *Azolla filiculoides* were present at Derryboy together with a blue-green alga thickly coating emergent vegetation. It was absent from Barrick Hill quarry near Gilford when Julia Nunn, Roger Field and I

looked, and from Loughinisland Lake where again there was a thick blue-green alga and absent too from Clea Lakes in late July. The waters of the Clea Lakes remain clear and are extensive. It was possible to search only the northern shore, but this was very productive, producing large stands of *Butomus umbellatus* with *Sparganium emersum*, *Oenanthe aquatilis*, *Lythrum portula*, *Littorella uniflora* and *Berula erecta*.

Gilford has a serious problem with *Heracleum mantegazzianum* which was growing abundantly along the river banks and setting seed, but when we visited, surprisingly, nothing seemed to have been done to control it.

In early August, the north shore road at Killyleagh was walked and *Asplenium marinum* was found growing on a wall north of the harbour, *Hieracium aurantiacum* on waste ground and on the upper shore, a single plant of *Phalaris canariensis*.

Portavoe Reservoir produced *Elodea nuttalli*, *Ceratophyllum demersum*, *Potamogeton filiformis*, *P. pectinatus* and *P. berchtoldii* in early August.

There was an excellent turn-out with the Belfast Naturalists Field Club on 6 August when the old railway line north of Dundrum was walked. The ground included salt marsh, brackish and fresh-water marsh. The pace was slower than usual, and time was taken to point out identification features of numerous species. Progress completely halted for a short time in the afternoon, as we walked out into Dundrum Bay to watch the Red Arrows make a spectacular display at the Newcastle Air Show. A good range of species was found, including *Vicia sylvatica*, but we failed to re-find *Crithmum maritimum*, recorded separately by Paul Hackney and I several years ago.

In mid-August, the first of two meetings for the BSBI took place at Tollymore Forest Park. Fiona Devery, Margaret Marshall and I walked along the Azalea Path to the Shimna River Bridge where *Epilobium brunnescens* x *E. montanum* was found. At the Hermitage,

*Polysticum aculeatum* was noted growing at its known station. *Festuca altissima* appeared to be spreading as several stations were noted and a single plant of *Carex pallescens* was found. *Dryopteris aemula* and *Oreopteris limbosperma* were found by the track to the Spinkwee River. *Melampyrum pratense* was found close to the bridge, but unfortunately, the water level in the river was too high to search effectively for filmy-ferns in the Spinkwee gorge.

The second meeting took place at Strangford, when four of us walked around the headland to the north of the village. *Erigeron karvinskianus* and *Erinus alpinus* were noted in the village, but we failed to find *Briza maxima* that I had recorded several years ago, possibly because the site was strimmed. *Acaena caesiiglauca* (NMW), a new record for Ireland, was found growing on the same wall that Ian McNeill found *Arenaria balearica* five years ago and, judging by the size of the plant, had been established for some years. Unfortunately *Arenaria balearica* was not found.

A second new record for Ireland was made in Lisburn the following day when *Arabidopsis arenosa* was found growing in mud on a footpath. In the absence of a botanist at the Ulster Museum, this plant was sent to Tim Rich at the National Museum of Wales for identification and was retained by him.

*Sedum telephium* was found near Annahilt in mid-August.

The BSBI had asked that a record for *Cuscuta epithymum* at Cloghy dunes be checked and a search was made, but without success.

Part of the Newry Canal near Jerrett's Pass was walked in late August, but this is now heavily overgrown and dominated by *Phragmites communis*. However, *Butomus umbellatus* and *Callitriche brutia* were seen.

Julia Nunn and I had a very pleasant walk around Corbet Lough in late August when we recorded *Berula erecta*, *Rorippa sylvestris*, *Bidens cernua*, *Ranunculus hederaceus* and *Senecio jacobaea* x *S.*



*aquaticus*. The north east end of the lough had a dense growth of blue-green algae, and the lower shore plants were thickly coated with algae.

On a cold dry day in early September, Roger Field and I met for the last monthly field meeting of the season at Holy Wells. Roger found *Sagina nodosa* by marshy stream and *Elytrigia x drucei* (*E. repens* x *E. atherica*) was found by the upper shore.

The last field trips of the season were spent recording *Atriplex* and *Zostera* spp. around the middle and north of Strangford Lough.

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## FIELD MEETING REPORTS, 2011

On Sunday 28 August, the day after the Irish AGM, 15 members met in Derrygonnelly to revisit some sites in southwest Fermanagh (H33) which were visited By R. Ll. Praeger in 1904.

We first stopped at the Correl Glen Nature Reserve, a birch and oak wood on sandstone. *Monotropa hypopitys* (Yellow Bird's-nest) was found beside the path close to where the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club had noted the species some years previously. *Dryopteris aemula* (Hay-scented Buckler-fern) was abundant under the moss-encrusted trees and *Equisetum hyemale* (Dutch Rush) grew in the unstable bank of the Scillies River. A large boulder beside the river had *Hymenophyllum tunbridgense* (Tunbridge Filmy-fern) on its vertical face while deep underneath the rock the gametophyte of *Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern) occurred.

The next stop was the sandstone scarp which runs east from Glencreawan Lough in Lough Navar Forest Park. Along this heavily wooded scarp many interesting species were found: *Orthilia secunda* (Serrated Wintergreen), *Meconopsis cambrica* (Welsh Poppy), *Asplenium viride* (Green Spleenwort) and *Equisetum pratense* (Shady Horsetail) had all been noted by Praeger and were refound, while *Vaccinium vitis-idea* (Cowberry), *Empetrum nigrum* (Crowberry),

*Neottia nidus-avis* (Bird's-nest Orchid) and *Pinguicula vulgaris* (Common Butterwort) were also recorded.

After lunch some members headed for home while the rest explored the northern shore of Glencreawan Lough. The lake was exceptionally low with a wide exposed foreshore which in places showed areas of limestone pavement which were normally submerged. The most interesting plant here was large swathes of *Parnassia palustris* (Grass-of-Parnassus). Part way along the shore a short diversion was made towards the Magho Cliffs overlooking Lower Lough Erne. While crossing the heather about a dozen *Neottia cordata* (Lesser Twayblade) were found growing through the sphagnum. Nearer the cliffs, a flushed area with loose stones produced *Selaginella selaginoides* (Lesser Clubmoss), more *Pinguicula vulgaris*, and *Saxifraga aizoides* (Yellow Mountain-saxifrage) which has first been found in this area by Abraham and McCullagh in 1901. Returning to the lake and continuing our circumnavigation, the best plants were *Pinguicula lusitanica* (Pale Butterwort), *Carex dioica* (Dioecious Sedge) and *Carex lasiocarpa* (Slender Sedge) whose thin leaves were very distinctive at the western end of the lough.

Robert Northridge

What was forecast to be a bad day weather wise, but to brighten up was exactly what we got on 10 September for a Co. Wexford (H12) meeting at Lady's Island Lake (T0.0) in the very southeast corner of the county. For the 14 members that did brave the elements, the first 20 minutes or so it just rained like there was no tomorrow. Out came the sun and the rest of the day was a beautiful sunny but very windy day. Along the sandy shore of the lake in very good numbers were: *Atriplex glabriuscula* (Babington's Orache), *A. littoralis* (Grass-leaved Orache), *Isolepis cernua* (Slender Club-rush) and *Juncus ranarius* (Frog Rush). We headed into the dunes to see *Achillea maritima* (Cottonweed), I was horrified at how little there was. There used to be thousands of plants, but in the last ten years the Cottonweed really has declined, at the rate the population is shrinking it could become extinct within the next ten years. On the inland side of the dunes *Glaucium flavum* (Yellow

Horned-poppy) was in their thousands, there were many straight lines of the poppies as if each time the water level had dropped another row of seeds had been deposited. Up the east side of the lake *Centaureum pulchellum* (Lesser Centaury) was plentiful and hiding amongst the taller vegetation the group eventually found four *Rumex maritimus* (Golden Dock), known in this site by Frankie Tenant and Roy Watson for over ten years.

The day was rounded off with a stop at Churchtown (T11.04) to see *Asplenium obovatum* (Lanceolate Spleenwort) on a granite wall.

Paul R. Green

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## **BSBI IRISH FIELD PROGRAMME, 2012**

**SATURDAY 26<sup>th</sup> & SUNDAY 27<sup>th</sup> MAY  
BELMULLET, WEST MAYO (H27)**

**Leader: Gerry Sharkey**

The intention is to explore and record the sand dune, machair and other coastal habitats on the Mullet, and adjacent parts of NW Co. Mayo. As members who visit Mayo are only too aware, the decision on exact sites to be visited is best left to the last minute, as the weather is unpredictable. (During last year's meeting in mid-July on Achill we had a small tornado which overturned a couple of trucks!) Meet each day at 10:30am in the Broadhaven Bay Hotel ([www.broadhavenbay.com](http://www.broadhavenbay.com)) car park.

Please let Gerry know if you will be attending, either by e-mail to [gsharkey@patodonnell.com](mailto:gsharkey@patodonnell.com) or by phone to 00 353 87 6202550 or 087 6202550.

**SATURDAY 9<sup>th</sup> & SUNDAY 10<sup>th</sup> JUNE  
EAST DONEGAL & WEST TYRONE (H34 & H36)**

**Leaders: Ian McNeill & John Faulkner**

On the Saturday, we will visit the area around Scraghy, which is of considerable interest for its botany, geology and scenery. It lies on

carboniferous rock, with both limestones and sandstones very near or at the surface. Plants we should see include: *Botrychium lunaria*, *Hymenophyllum wilsonii*, *Pseudorchis albida*, *Platanthera bifolia*, *P. chlorantha*, *Dactylorhiza purpurella*, *Coeoglossum viride*. Meet at 11am at Scraghy (H213743) on the B72, midway between Ederny and Castledearg.

On Sunday, we will attempt some systematic recording of the Lough Derg area to the west of Scraghy. Meet at 10am at the car park on the SE side of L. Derg (H092730), approached from Pettigo. Contacts: I. McNeill - Tel: 028 867 62939 or John Faulkner - Tel: 028 38891317 or jsf@globalnet.co.uk

**SATURDAY 16<sup>th</sup> & SUNDAY 17<sup>th</sup> JUNE**  
**KILBEGGAN, CO. WESTMEATH (H23)**  
**Leader: Con Breen**

The object of this 2-day meeting will be to explore under-recorded habitats in the south of H23. Among habitats to be visited will be fen, esker, raised bog and the disused railway line between Mullingar and Athlone. In 2010, a new site for *Eriophorum gracile* was found in this area in a most unlikely habitat.

Meet at 10.30am on each day in the centre of Kilbeggan (N333356) at the Bank of Ireland building. Contact: Con Breen, 101 Bettyglen, Raheny, Dublin 5: Tel: 01 8313573, Mob: 086 3539295.

**SATURDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> JUNE**  
**SEDGE IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP**  
**MULLINGAR, CO. WESTMEATH (H23)**  
**Leader: Con Breen**

This is a training meeting for anybody who wishes to improve their sedge identification skills – beginners welcome. Anybody wishing to have material identified will be free to bring along specimens bearing roots, basal sheaths and fruits (utricles) together with habitat details. A variety of habitats in the immediate vicinity of Mullingar area will be visited. As some of these habitats will be very wet, wellies are strongly advised.

Meet at 10.30am at Mullingar Railway Station (at western end of Mullingar at end of Dominick Street, the main street of Mullingar). If proceeding in a westerly direction, turn left at traffic lights *before* canal bridge immediately past the Newbury Hotel). Traffic coming from the opposite direction should turn right immediately *after* crossing the canal bridge. Contact: Con Breen, 101 Bettyglen, Raheny, Dublin 5: Tel: 01 8313573, Mob: 086 3539295.

**FRIDAY 29<sup>th</sup> JUNE to SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup> JULY  
RATHLIN ISLAND, CO. ANTRIM (H39)**

**Leader:** David McNeill

This 3-day meeting will explore some of Rathlin's richest coastal, heath and wetland habitats, including the famous nature reserves at the west end, the National Trust property of Ballyconagan on the north coast and the RSPB's Roonavoolin Walk on the southern arm of the island. The rarer plants should include *Sedum rosea*, *Mertensia maritima*, *Sagina subulata* and *Oenanthe lachenalii*.

Accommodation for 2 nights has been provisionally arranged on the island at a cost of £25.50 per night for B&B. Numbers are limited, so it is advised to book early and by 28 February at the latest. Those staying for the full duration will meet at the Ballycastle ferry on Friday morning and return to Ballycastle late on Sunday afternoon. Please contact David to book your attendance and to ensure that you receive further details (even if you are unable to attend for the whole weekend but would like to join us for part of the time). Contact: Tel: 028 90942341 or e-mail: [dw.mcneill@ntlworld.com](mailto:dw.mcneill@ntlworld.com).

**SATURDAY 7<sup>th</sup> JULY  
CAVAN TOWN AREA (H30)**

**Leader:** Jonathan Shackleton

Our aim will be to revisit some of the routes and localities, including Slieve Glah and Lough Oughter, botanised by Robert Lloyd Praeger in the summer of 1896. Meet 10.30am at the Cavan Crystal Hotel car park on LHS of Dublin Road approaching town from Dublin, just after leaving N3 roundabout. Gum boots are recommended, but if you want to follow strictly Praeger's route of 11 July 1896, bring swimming gear too.

Contact: Jonathan Shackleton, Tel: (RoI) 046 9242480, Mob: 087 2314324, or email: [jjshackleton@gmail.com](mailto:jjshackleton@gmail.com).

**SATURDAY 14<sup>th</sup> JULY  
THE LONG DERRIES, CO. OFFALY (H18)**

**Leader:** Fiona Devery

The Long Derries is a series of disused sand quarries running out in to the surrounding bog. The flora is a mix of native and alien species including *Erigeron acer*, *Acinos arvensis* and *Erigeron annuus*.

Meet at the car park of Lidl supermarket in Edenderry at 10.30am.  
Contact: Fiona Devery, E-mail: [findevery@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:findevery@yahoo.co.uk) or Mob: 087 7614032,

**SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup> JULY**  
**HOOK HEAD, CO WEXFORD (H12)**  
**Leader:** Paul Green

The aim of the meeting will be to look for *Limonium binervosum* (Rock Sea-lavender), which was last reported in 1990, and to record for the Flora of Wexford project. Other species to be seen should be: *Erodium maritimum* (sea stork's-bill), *Inula crithmoides* (Golden-samphire) and *Kickxia elatine* (Sharp-leaved Fluellen). The Hook Head is a very open exposed spot, but there is a tea room and toilets at the Hook Head lighthouse visitor centre.

Meet at 11am in car park at Hook Head lighthouse visitor centre (X733973).  
Contact: E-mail: [paulnewross@eircom.net](mailto:paulnewross@eircom.net), Mob: 087 7782496.

**SATURDAY 21<sup>st</sup> JULY**  
**GREENORE, CO. LOUTH (H31)**  
**Leader:** Donal Synnott

We will record shoreline plants at Greenore and in nearby fens (*Epipactis palustris*, *Parnassia palustris* and a good selection of sedges), followed by the mixed flora of Barnavave on the E. slope of Carlingford Mt. where there is a mixture of basic and acid rock.

Meet at 10.30am at Greenore Point (J224110). Contact: [donalsynnott@gmail.com](mailto:donalsynnott@gmail.com).

**THURSDAY 9<sup>th</sup> AUGUST**  
**PLANT IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP**  
**LOUGHGALL, CO. ARMAGH (H37)**  
**Leader:** John Faulkner

Have you struggled to identify plants using a flora and then wondered how many of your answers are correct? The aim of this one-day meeting will be to improve field recognition skills, with special emphasis on grasses and sedges. Bring your usual flora and a lens.

Please book with John by 31st July – or earlier if you want to be sure of a place. Meet at 10.00am in the car park at Loughgall Country Park (H907519).

There is a small parking fee, but please do not park on the village street.  
Contact: Tel: 028 38891317, or e-mail: jsf@globalnet.co.uk.

**SATURDAY 11<sup>th</sup> & SUNDAY 12<sup>th</sup> AUGUST  
GALTEE MOUNTAINS, S. TIPPERARY (H7)**

**Leader:** Rosaleen Fitzgerald

Although most of the alpine flora of the Galtee mountains as recorded by Hart has been refound by Stelfox and Harrington and Curtis, one plant continues to be elusive – *Saussurea alpina*. On Saturday, we will make another attempt to refind this plant, which was found by Hart when he travelled from Lough Diheen to Galtymore. Other plants that should be seen include *Salix herbacea*, *Saxifraga stellaris*, *Sedum rosea*, *Carex bigelowii*. On the second day, we will visit Lough Curra, which should enable us to see plants such as *Oxyria digyna*, *Saxifraga hypnoides*, *Carex dioica*, *Asplenium viride*, *Vaccinium vitis idea*, *Arabis petraea*, *Huperzia selago*, *Cystopteris fragilis*, *Campanula rotundifolia*.

On both days, we will meet at 10.30am in the car park at the back of Cahir House Hotel (S054245), opposite the Catholic Church in Cahir. Contact: Tel: 00 353 16244169, Mobile: 0857480726. Both days may be fairly strenuous, so wear strong boots with good ankle support, and bring rainwear, lunch and a hot drink.

**SATURDAY 18<sup>th</sup> & SUNDAY 19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST  
IRISH REGION AGM**

The Committee for Ireland, BSBI is pleased to announce that the AGM this year will be held in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin on 18 and 19 August. For practical purposes it will be combined with a Recorders Conference but all members are most welcome to join in the activities. There are exciting things happening on the recording front and the talks and workshops associated with this year's AGM will show-case some of these for vice-county recorders and the general members of the Society in Ireland. Additionally, we hope to include a workshop on a specialist group of plants (so, pack your hand-lenses!). Details will be posted out to all members in early July.

Enquiries to Brian Rushton: E-mail: bsracademic@hotmail.co.uk or Tel: 028 70324482.

## **BSBI COMMITTEE FOR IRELAND**

### **A SURVEY OF MARSH HELLEBORINE, *EPIPACTIS PALUSTRIS* IN IRELAND**

We are currently entering into an era when unprecedented demands are to be placed on the natural environment. With the relaxation of milk quotas, the national dairy herd is expected to increase by as much as 50%. As a result, many new pressures are about to impact on the environment in the form of land use changes, resulting from intensified grazing and related farming practices. Coupled with the effects of increased food and chemical inputs and subsequent slurry outputs, it is anticipated that the flora and vegetation of many wetland habitats will be severely degraded through eutrophication and poaching.

Many BSBI recorders are reluctant to become involved in the legal and technical aspects of habitat conservation. In order to have a site recognised and included in a county development plan, or even a local area plan, that knowledge must be conveyed in some appropriate and secure form to the local and national conservation authorities. The botanical records that form the information backdrop for biogeographical research, conservation and planning have been traditionally contributed by the voluntary (NGO) sector. However, most BSBI members are busy people. Delimiting the boundaries of sites of ecological interest is time-consuming, expensive and difficult, and is ultimately the duty of other governmental conservation bodies. On the other hand BSBI members usually have very precise knowledge of the locations of key rare species within their preferred study areas. Recording and mapping the locations of these species would go some way towards indicating the presence of ecologically significant sites and vegetation types. It is very difficult to produce forensic evidence of changes in the landscape, if the necessary benchmark observations never occurred or have never been properly recorded.

Following the Atlas 2000 project, the BSBI Committee for Ireland has considered a number of new initiatives in the area of Irish



botanical recording. The Atlas survey indicated that many sites of high ecological and floristic significance had never been formally recognised or included in the conservation site inventory. Details of their locations are therefore not available to conservation organisations, local authority planners or fellow naturalists. A comprehensive inventory of all the sites of ecological interest in Ireland is now more than ever a necessity but in the present financial circumstances is most unlikely to happen. Some members may feel uncomfortable in trying to characterise the exact ecological nature of any individual site, despite knowing that it may be a site of considerable importance. Terms such as bog, fen, marsh, slack and various types of mire have been utilised in the past to describe types of wetland habitats, but these names have not been applied in a consistent fashion.

No such ambiguity attaches to a well-defined and easily recognised species such as Marsh Helleborine, *Epipactis palustris*. Field botanists remember this species and often recall its whereabouts without difficulty after many years. Despite the decline in wetlands it seems to be holding on in some areas and may even be increasing. However in other instances it appears that the original colonies, especially those recorded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century have been destroyed. Ascertaining the current conservation status of this species is therefore a desirable and attainable objective for the BSBI in Ireland. It is a medium-rare species – rare enough to be interesting and frequent enough for field botanists to have some prospect of finding it. The Atlas indicates that the species has been recorded in 98 separate 10km squares since 1987 and from 62 other 10km squares pre-1987. In some of these latter instances it may simply have been missed but in other cases the sites may be permanently lost.

The question arises as to how this type of information can be utilised to promote the active conservation of such sites in Ireland. At an initial level, the Marsh Helleborine survey has the potential to contribute a small but significant body of evidence that will track the welfare of key sites. In addition, it is usually the case that many other rare species occur in association with *Epipactis palustris*, responding to similar environmental conditions. This information, properly collated

can serve to illustrate the floristic and ecological impact of landscape changes resulting from various economic and social trends.

However in the first instance knowledge of the basic whereabouts of these sites is all that is needed and this information can be brought together under the leadership of the BSBI in Ireland. A large-scale, detailed map and analysis of the occurrence of *Epipactis palustris* in Ireland would highlight the presence of these sites, habitats and significant associated species. Therefore, in 2012, it is proposed to conduct a preliminary review of the occurrence of *Epipactis palustris* in Ireland

I have already examined the specimens in the National Herbarium (DBN) having been provided with images of all the herbarium specimens by the Director. In addition I have made good progress working through the literature tracing the wording of the original records. I have also been supplied with the file for *Epipactis palustris* from the new amalgamated BSBI database and am attempting to identify and address the creations of the BGX gridding aberrations. (In the early days of computerised species-mapping the British National Grid was extended across the Irish Sea. One consequence of this is that an original record may have been assigned or subsequently re-assigned to an incorrect modern 10km square.) In addition, I have started to match the herbarium specimens that correspond to the original published records. Arising out of this I expect by the end of March to have generated a list of all the known historical (pre 1987) sites with an initial approximation of the contemporary grid reference of each known site.

In the case of more recent records, the original recorder will be asked to provide confirmation of the record and where possible an indication of the most recent date record of the species at the site in question. It will also be possible to correct or refine the grid reference at this stage. Recorders will be asked to complete a simple form for each site. Where possible it is hoped to generate GPS grid references, especially for the older records. Prior to the 2012 field season, an initial report will be produced reviewing all the known historical records. At

this initial stage no new fieldwork is envisaged or expected, though new records and confirmations of older known sites would be very welcome.

No previously unpublished records or site information will be released into the public domain. New and second county records as well as any other records of significance, that arise, should in the first instance be published in the usual journals. The records created by recent recorders are considered to be original records and will remain their property. The compiler of the report will not release any site-specific data contributed by any individual to anyone for any reason. The purpose of this measure is to guarantee the protection of the recorder from any legal action that might ensue as a result of their being present on private property. The name of the recorder or any other personal details will not be disclosed to any third party by the scheme organiser.

It is intended that data will be published in the form of a short paper in *Irish Botanical News* and as a longer separate report which will be issued to the contributors. These reports will include a large A4 map of the distribution which will include a level of detail not possible on the much smaller Britain and Ireland BSBI Atlas 2000 map. If sufficient interest exists, the project will be extended into 2013, where more detailed site surveys, population counts and vegetation studies are envisaged for areas where access and recording are not prohibited. An interim progress report will be issued following consultation with the participants.

In future years other rare species with contrasting habitat requirements and vegetation community affiliation may be suitable subjects for further similar preliminary studies.

If you would like to take part in this project, please contact me and I will forward a batch of recording cards and expanded notes on the published records and the relevant historical records. These cards are intended to be as simple as possible. It is not necessary to complete all sections. You will also be provided with copies of the more detailed

BSBI Rare Species survey form if you feel that you are in a position to complete more detailed site reports.

Please contact me at doogueflora@gmail.com or 12 Glasilawn Rd., Dublin 11.

D. Doogue, March 2012. Tel: 01-8341504 or 086-7910311.

## **RECORDING THE IRISH FLORA**

As members of the BSBI in Ireland, you can't have failed to notice that one of our major areas of activity is the recording and documentation of the Irish flora. This is done through our network of vice-county recorders who work on a voluntary basis carrying out field surveys, assembling and safe-keeping of the records, verifying and updating BSBI's distribution databases and occasionally preparing reports, e.g. on 'Rare and Threatened Plant Species' in their vice-county. It is a voluntary undertaking and the Committee for Ireland is extremely grateful for all the hard work put in by our vice-county recorders. Sometimes, opportunities arise to join the ranks of this network through resignations, etc., and, sometimes, it becomes necessary to share out the work-load so that new recorders can operate as 'apprentices' or joint recorders. Extra pairs of hands (and eyes!) are always welcome.

If you would like to get involved with recording the Irish flora either in your own vice-county, or an adjacent vice-county or an area that you visit frequently then please contact me by email or by letter. You do not need to be a 'professional' botanist to engage in recording work. I can assure you that if you do get involved, you will receive the full support of the BSBI's recorder network and the Committee for Ireland.

Brian S. Rushton

Chair, Committee for Ireland, Irish Regional Branch, BSBI  
62 Semicock Road, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland, BT53  
6PY. E-mail: bsracademic@hotmail.co.uk

## BOOK REVIEWS

*A guide to The Waterford Coast.* Declan McGrath. 344 pp. Intacta Print Ltd., Waterford Airport Business Park, Waterford. €20 paperback. From local book shops or from D. McGrath, 10 The Estuary, King's Channel, Waterford. ISBN 978-0-9541062-3-2.

Another superbly put together book, by Declan with a 32 page section on the flora of the Waterford coast. There are many superb pictures of plants to be seen and where they can be found along the coast.

This book is packed full of all the information you may wish to read about the Waterford coast from geology, climate and coastal processes, fauna, maritime facilities, archaeological sites, beaches, coves and walks etc.,.

If you have not yet visited the Waterford coast you certainly will want to after reading this book.

*Wildflowers of Ireland – A Personal Record.* Zoë Devlin. 424 pp. The Collins Press, West Link Press, Doughcloyne, Wilton, Cork. €29.99/£26.99 hard back. ISBN-978-1-84889-126-5.

When Zoë was shown a wild orchid by a relative, the late Dr Kathleen Lynn, it sparked a lifelong interest in wildflowers, accumulating in this wonderful book – *Wildflowers of Ireland – A Personal Record*.

Part one of this book is packed full of very useful information with chapters on the history of wildflowers of Ireland, the importance of our wildflowers, the flowering plant, the life cycle of plants, classification of plants etc.,.

Part two contains descriptions and detailed photographs (see front cover) of over 400 species, all taken by Zoë, are embellished with herbal and literary references, and related Irish folklore. There is a distribution map for each species; these were created by using data supplied by the BSBI.

This book creates a new awareness and wider picture of the wildflowers in Ireland without being over scientific or bogged down by terminology.

Paul R. Green

*Webb's An Irish Flora* (8<sup>th</sup> edition). John Parnell & Tom Curtis. 560 pp. Cork University Press, [www.corkuniversitypress.com](http://www.corkuniversitypress.com). €35/£30 hard back. ISBN-978-185918-478-3.

A handy reference book for botanists both amateur and professional....this flora remains the most useful pocket guide to the Irish flora. This handbook will provide the reader with a clear and reliable means of identifying those plants which grow wild in Ireland. It is a comprehensive re-working of the classic and standard Flora of Ireland which was last published 16 years ago: this will be the eighth edition of that work. It has been brought fully up to date through incorporating the latest in botanical research and it reflects contemporary and modern approaches to plant classification based on recent advances in genetics. This book is about the higher plants that grow wild and which are commonly naturalised or otherwise encountered in Ireland. It is designed to help you identify and provide you with background information on plant morphology, distribution and rarity and to educate all those interested in recognising the species of the flora of Ireland.

John Parnell is Professor of Systematic Botany at Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and Dr. Tom Curtis is an Ecological Consultant and a Research Associate in Botany at TCD and an Adjunct Lecturer in Botany and Plant science, NUI Galway.

Mike Collins

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**MINUTES OF THE 2011 AGM HELD AT DERRYGONNELLY  
FIELD CENTRE, CO. FERMANAGH, ON 27 AUGUST  
2011 (unapproved)**

**WELCOME**

Brian Rushton, committee Chairman welcomed the attendance of 26 No. members and outlined the programme for the weekend, including presentations by Ian Mc Neill, Robert Northridge, Ralph Forbes, Julia Nunn, Graham Day and the chairman himself, all to take place after the AGM. A field meeting had been arranged for the following day, Sunday under the leadership of Robert Northridge.

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies have been received from: - Con Breen, Mark Wright, Alan Hill, Paul Green, and Fiona Devery.

**MINUTES OF AGM 2010**

The minutes of the AGM 2010, held at Castlebar, Co. Mayo on 6<sup>th</sup> August were read and approved.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 2010 AGM**

Lynne Farrell (Hon Gen Sec of Council) was a welcome visitor to the AGM and Lynne commented on the acknowledged service of the spring conference and AGM held at NUI Galway on 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> June. Lynne reported that there was an attendance of 110 members and that as a result of the conference, important new contacts were established between the BSBI and NUI Galway. Lynne hoped that they would be followed up by the Committee for Ireland with NUI Galway and that there would lead to the development of future joint projects with the BSBI.

**HON SECRETARY / CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2010/2011**

The Hon Sec. read the report which is attached below.

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**CHAIRMAN'S / HON SECRETARY'S REPORT 2010-2011**

The Committee met on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2010, at Armagh Museum, on January 15<sup>th</sup> 2011 at National Botanic Gardens and on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at Armagh Museum.

## **FIELD MEETINGS**

John Faulkner, Field Meeting Secretary arranged a programme of 7 meetings for the year, 5 of which have taken place to date. Two of these meetings were designed to introduce a training element. In addition to the above a number of field trips were organised as part of the Central Council AGM to Connemara, The Burren and the Aran Islands.

## **TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION**

Gerry Sharkey and Michael Archer prepared reports of their visit to the Field Identification Skills Certificate event at the Gateway Centre, Shrewsbury and submitted these to the Committee. It is considered that the principal of this type of event could be of benefit to Irish Field Botanists, but that it should be included into an overall strategy to improve I.D. skills and the standard of plant recording generally.

## **RECORDING**

During the year, the Committee has spent a considerable amount of time discussing the standard of recording throughout our 40 Vice Counties and examining ways in which this could be improved and expanded.

Our Chairman, Brian Rushton has prepared an in depth questionnaire which was distributed to V.C. Recorders and on the basis of the responses to this and our further on-going discussions, the Committee are aiming to produce a number of initiatives intended to up the level and standard of Field Recording and Record Keeping.

In addition to projects initiated by Central Council, specific Irish projects such as the recording of *Epipactis palustris* in its associated habitats will be rolled out during the coming year.



Your Committee is also intending to arrange for an Annual Recorders Conference to which will be invited expert guest speakers to talk about particular taxa and general recording matters.

We have requested the advice and assistance of David Pearman the Chairman of the Records Committee at Central Council and are arranging for his attendance at our forthcoming October Committee Meeting.

## **FINANCES**

For the first time in the recent past the Committee has appointed an Hon. Treasurer, namely Fiona Devery. We have agreed a procedure for claiming and approving expenses and the method of payment from Central Funds, where appropriate.

## **COMMITTEE CHANGES**

Two Committee members have resigned during the year, namely Paul Hackney and John Wallace. As well as the two Committee members that are due to retire this year, namely Paul Green and Michael Archer we will be required at the AGM to elect new members in accordance with the rules of the New Constitution to restore the Committee to its full compliment.

## **V.C. RECORDERS - CHANGES**

Rory Hodd was appointed to the position of joint V.C. recorder to South Kerry (**H01**).

## **BSBI COUNCIL AGM 2011**

The AGM and associated Field Meetings (referred to above) were based at NUI Galway. The Long weekend (Sat - Tues 18<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> June) was considered to be a resounding success, due largely to the efforts and organisational skills of John Bailey and Micheline Sheehy Skeffington. Our thanks to them and all of the speakers and Field Meeting leaders.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Again this year we note that two of our Vice County Recorders have been involved in the production of two magnificent books on Irish

Botany and Irish Nature – namely Declan Doogue and John Faulkner. Congratulations are in order.

Michael Archer,  
*Honorary Secretary, BSBI Committee for Ireland*

Date: August 2011

## **ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The Hon Sec reported that two members had been proposed for the 3 vacancies, namely: Robert Northridge – proposed by Brian Rushton, seconded by Michael Archer and Declan Doogue – proposed by Brian Rushton and seconded by Gerry Sharkey.

As no further proposals had been notified and it was therefore up to the attending members to propose a third candidate Paul Green was proposed by John Faulkner and seconded by Caroline Mhic Dauid.

As there were no further proposals, the above three were deemed to be elected as full members of the committee.

The appointment of officers and the membership of the full committee will be confirmed at the first meeting at the end of October.

## **FIELD MEETINGS**

John Faulkner, Field Meetings Secretary reported on the success of field meetings throughout the year, including the well attended outing connected with the Council AGM in June.

John as always is seeking offers and ideas for next year and hopes to get a response from V.C. recorders who have not led a meeting in the recent past.

There was also a general opinion expressed that meetings should be open to a wider public and that there should be more emphasis on training, including instruction for beginners.

Declan Doogue pointed out that we needed to train up new V.C. recorders if we are to be able to make a significant contribution to Atlas 2020.

Lynne Farrell commented on the fact that next year, at least half of the Scottish meetings would be for beginners.

John Wann stated that he was involved in running training courses.

It was a general feeling that this is a subject that should be given special attention by the incoming committee.

Reports from V.C. recorders were given by:

Graham Day (**H38**) Co. Down

Caroline Mhic Daeid (**H01**) S. Kerry

Ralph Sheppard (**H35**) W. Donegal

Gerry Sharkey (**H26 & H27**) Mayo

#### **A.O.B.**

Lynne Farrell advised of a number of important appointments and news from Central Council, including.

- a. New appointments to Council
- b. Correspondence between Council and Ulster Museum
- c. Grant finance – availability
- d. Possibility of appointment of Irish Officer
- e. Foras Forbatha reports (1970's), some county reports still available from Lynne

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The first meeting of the new 2012 Committee is scheduled for Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October at National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

#### **CLOSE**

The formal AGM was closed by the Chairman, after which the members were treated to informative and entertaining presentations by 'The Authors'

Michael Archer, *Honorary Secretary, BSBI Committee for Ireland*

**MAURA SCANNELL  
(1924 – 2011)**

**REMINISCENCES**

A full obituary will be printed in the BSBI yearbook 2013.

My first ever BSBI field meeting was West Cork (**H03**), in the summer of 1997, led by Maura Scannell. On arrival in Bandon, a little unsure, I looked around for the leader. Wearing a stylish hat and holding Webb's *Flora* in her hand she immediately stood out from the crowd. Maura took me under her wing that day and generously dispensed tips on plant identification. The following day she showed this novice not only the beautiful *Carex limosa*, (Bog-sedge), but also how to avoid sinking through the floating mat of vegetation where it grows. She will be sadly missed.

Fiona Devery

Glaring at armed soldiers at Six Counties border posts, not wanting to stop for an imperial occupation power which she refused to recognise.

Splashing along the shores of Louth Derg, leading us straight to the right stand of willows hiding *Inula salicina*.

Holding court among a crowd of BSBI members, picnicking beside the bridge at Inistioge, managing to look queenly in a pink knitted hat.

Wearing a magical multi-coloured shawl at a conference dinner, answering a cheeky (well flown) questioner about why she never married, saying that plants took her time, and anyway 'the humour has left me now'. No botanist ever had greater dignity in all circumstances!

Ro FitzGerald

I met Maura just the once, we had a brief chat about *Minuartia recurva* (Recurved Sandwort) in Ireland for several minutes at the National Botanic Gardens. It is Maura's kindness that I will always remember. Once she knew I was interested in the flora of Co. Waterford, I was sent many botanical articles and papers relating to the county, some of these were original printings from over a 100 years ago. Maura also sent me various county Floras from around Ireland. Each parcel always had a note to say no need to acknowledge. I will always be very grateful for her kindness and generosity.

Paul R. Green

One of the first times that I was on a field trip with Maura was in 1986 when I led a BSBI trip to the Alt Mountain near Ardara on the 100th anniversary of Hart's visit there in 1886 when he found *Saxifraga aizoides*.

Hannah and I had our four children with us, all under nine years. Half way up the mountain Maura stopped, sat down with them, and proceeded to show them how to make corn dollies and St. Bridget's crosses; they thought that she was wonderful and have not forgotten her!

Robert Northridge

I am a botanist because of Maura Scannell. She was friendly with my aunt Elinor Wiltshire in Dublin in the early 1960s, and my aunt must have told her that she had a niece doing science. And Maura must then have told her about this new society in Ireland, the Botanical Society of the British Isles. The summer of 1964 was approaching and I had just finished my first year at Trinity, unsure of which subjects I wanted to pursue. My aunt said that she would pay for me to go on a junior BSBI residential meeting at Roundstone. I went and had a wonderful time! Apart from the young people, including schoolboy Daniel Kelly, there was the leader Peter Hunt from Kew, also Father Moore from UCD and David Webb. I loved being out in the field in Connemara and identifying plants, and at the end of two weeks I had no doubt about what I wanted to be – a botanist!

It was also Maura who first suggested that I write a Flora of Co. Limerick. With small children in the late 1970s, that seemed impossible. However, more than 30 years later and now a grandmother, I am trying to finish that Flora! Maura's correspondence, particularly her typed notes, was always fun to unravel. It was she who drew my attention to the first published Limerick record, *Geranium lucidum* on walls in Limerick, spotted by a trooper in King William's army in 1703. Maura's continuing interest in my work and her friendship have been important to me over the years, and her influence will live on.

Sylvia Reynolds

I wish I could remember when I first met Maura Scannell; it was probably in the late 1970s in either Belfast or Dublin. Whilst I can't now remember where or when it was, I do remember the impression she left on me. In common parlance, I thought she was 'one smart cookie'! Over the years, I think a sort of 'mutual admiration society' emerged. I admired her professional approach to field botany whilst she admired my editing skills. As time went on, we exchanged numerous letters ... or, more accurately, notes ... on all manner of things, largely, but not exclusively botany. I'm not sure she established the same letter-exchange with others, but, if she did, then her output must have been monumental.

I always found Maura a very generous woman and perhaps two examples of this, that spring to mind, will help readers develop their own picture of her.

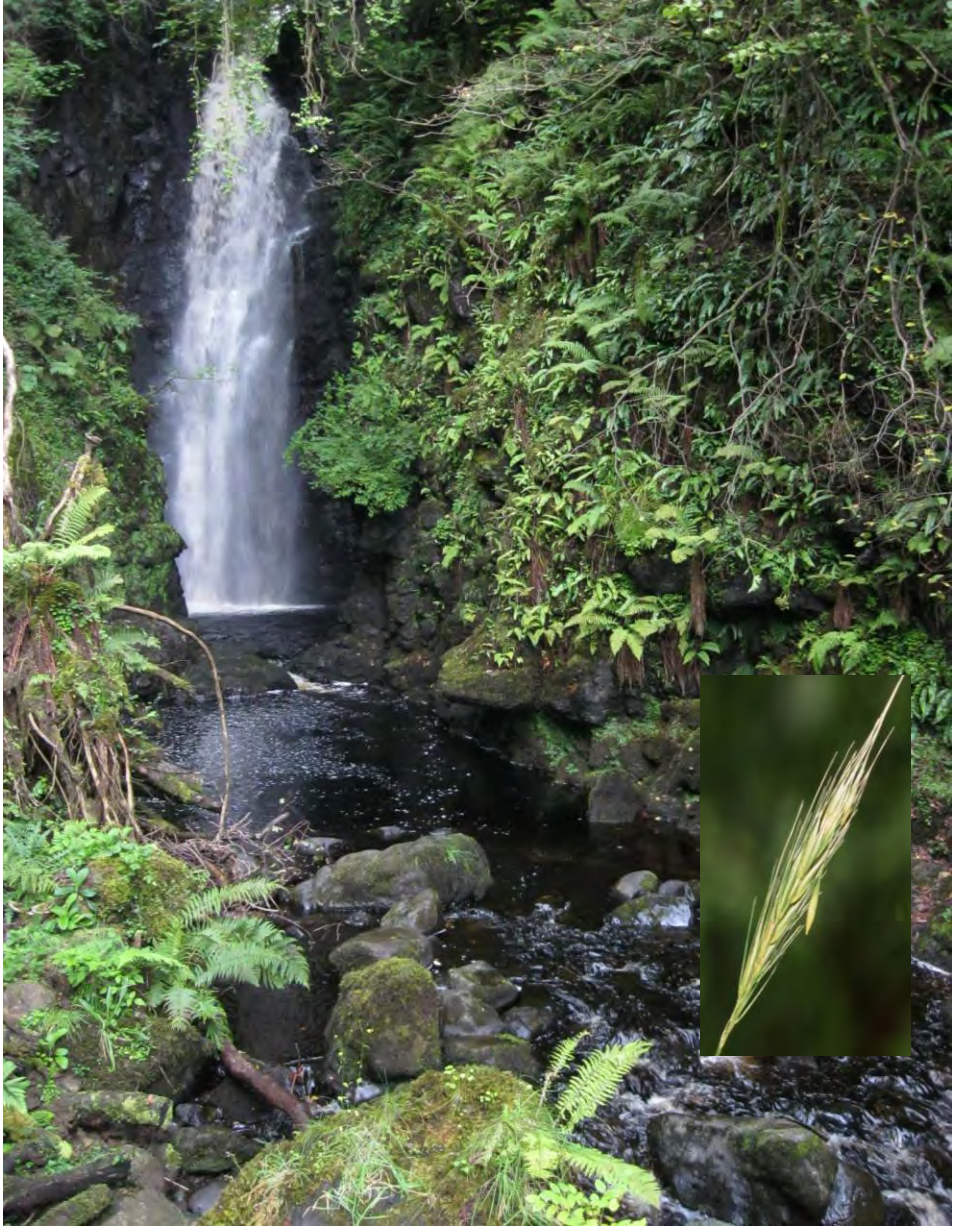
I had a committee meeting in Dublin at the Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin; it was a few days before Christmas. At the appointed hour, the meeting started and, un-characteristically, Maura was missing. Fifteen minutes in, and Maura appeared, slightly out of breath and flustered. She apologised profusely for her lateness; the reason was she had been shopping for Christmas presents and proceeded to delve into her capacious bag and give each member of the committee a small pack of coffee beans as a present. A lovely gesture and much appreciated.

That was planned but, on another occasion, the generosity was spontaneous. Again I had a meeting in Dublin on a Saturday afternoon and had taken my wife and young son Ian (he was about five at the time) down as well so that we could do some shopping beforehand. We were walking down O'Connell Street and 'bumped' into Maura who was also going to the meeting. I introduced my wife and son. Maura again delved into a very large shopping bag and pulled out a colouring-in book and set of crayons and gave them to Ian. He was over-joyed and spent many hours with them over the ensuing months. At the time, she explained that she had bought them for relatives but had a 'few over'! Totally un-expected and very thoughtful. Ian never forgot the rather stern-looking woman with the funny hat who had given him a present!

I mentioned correspondence before. This covered every conceivable aspect of botany. Often the notes were related to field observations that she thought should be followed up. Many were odd snippets of information that she'd found in her wide-reading ... and a few of these made their way, eventually, into *Irish Botanical News*. One of her very last notes to me was about stamps! She had seen the 20 cent stamp in the fifth phase of stamps from the sixth definitive series, entitled 'Wild Flowers of Ireland' issued originally on 3 March 2008. This particular series was designed to show species typically found in coastal areas and included Thrift (20 cents), Biting Stonecrop (50 cents) and Sea Aster (82 cents) illustrated by Susan Sex. Maura was very unhappy about the depiction of Thrift ... she wrote that the inflorescence was, in her opinion, a globular mop-head, not the loose association of flowers depicted. I wasn't sure what I was expected to do (if anything)! But it was written in her inimitable, somewhat terse style – with an ageing type-writer on recycled paper. In many ways, I'm rather grateful she never became computer-literate (as far as I'm aware) ... she would have been a prodigious e-mailer!

I miss her; she was a 'one-off'.

Brian S. Rushton



Cranny Falls, Co. Antrim. Insert *Hordelymus europaeus* (Wood Barley). Photo Mark Jannink, © 2011. See page 14.