

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF THE BRITISH ISLES

WELSH BULLETIN

Editor: R.H. Roberts

No. 28, JANUARY 1978

Price: 15p



Potentilla rupestris

Reprinted from *Welsh Wildlife in Trust*,
with permission from the artist.

CONTENTS

Annual General Meeting, Plas Tanybwlich, 1977.....	2
Annual General Meeting, 1978	3
Programme of Field Meetings, 1978	4
"A new Flora of Gwynedd". M.O. Hill	5
Cotoneaster integerrimus - a conservation exercise. M. Morris	6
Bryn Euryn, Colwyn Bay. J.M. Brummitt	8
Short Notes:	
Botanical recording in Pembrokeshire. T.A.W. Davis	10
The Botanical work of Janet Macnair. P.A. Parr	10
Obituary - Mrs Mary Richards, M.B.E., M.Sc.	11

Editorial.

Our grateful thanks are due to all those who have sent in the interesting contributions which appear in this issue.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1977. Report by Hon. Secretary

The fifteenth A.G.M. of the B.S.B.I. Wales was held at Plas Tanybwllch, Maentwrog, Gwynedd, on July 2, 1977.

The Chairman, Mr S.G. Harrison, introduced Dr M. Percival who gave a fascinating talk on various aspects of Floral Biology. Topics such as insect pollination of flowers and floral structure were discussed and illustrated by excellent colour slides.

During the business part of the meeting new Officers and Committee members were elected. The Secretary then gave a report of the previous year's activities. He first congratulated Dr W.S. Lacey on being awarded a Personal Chair in Botany at the University College of North Wales, Bangor, and on being the recipient of H.M. The Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal. He then drew attention to the fact that at the last A.G.M. the Society had lost the services of four distinguished members in Mike Porter, who was for six years Hon. Secretary; Mrs I.M. Vaughan, and Miss A.C. Powell who had served the Society well for many years; and Mr Massey who had been Minutes Secretary. All four were thanked for their valuable contributions to the Society.

Two Field Meetings had so far been held. The first, led by Mr G. Wynne at St Asaph, concentrated on recording for the Flora of Flint and the second, led by Mr P. Benoit, visited some upland sites in the Llangower area of Gwynedd. Gratitude was expressed to the leaders for the effort and care that had obviously been put into making these meetings successful.

Members were then informed of a change in name of the Committee from the 'Welsh Region Committee' to 'Committee for Wales' and a similar change in name of the Bulletin from 'Welsh Region Bulletin' to 'Welsh Bulletin'.

A change in the editorship of the Bulletin was also reported. Mrs I.M. Vaughan, who had edited the July Bulletin for several years, had resigned and thanks were expressed to her for the effort and hard work she had put into it. Mr S.G. Harrison took over as editor of the July issue (from the January issue) and Mr R.H. Roberts, with the assistance of Professor W.S. Lacey, took over as editor of the January issue.

Among other items the Secretary reported that:

- 1) Comments on the Draft of the Dyfed Structure Plan had been forwarded to the County Council;
- 2) Attempts were still being made to produce a Welsh Language version of the Conservation Poster;
- 3) Mrs Parr has resigned as v.c. Recorder for Montgomeryshire and Miss D. Pugh has agreed to succeed her;
- 4) Mrs Parr has also resigned from the Committee and she was warmly thanked for all her help.

After tea Mr Mark Hill and Dr A. Pentecost spoke on the proposed new 'Flora of Gwynedd'. A précis of Mr Hill's talk is included elsewhere in this Bulletin. In the evening Dr Percival showed a fascinating film on Insect pollination of flowers that she had taken herself and this was much enjoyed by all who saw it, as was a series of colour slides of flowers of Singapore presented by Mr S.G. Harrison. A small exhibit on Welsh County Floras old and new was shown.

Following the election of Officers and Members, the composition of the Committee for Wales for 1977-78 is as follows:

Chairman	:	Mr S.G. Harrison
Vice-Chairman	:	Mr Goronwy Wynne
Secretary	:	Mr R.G. Ellis
Minutes Secretary	:	Dr J.G. Duckett

Committee members:

Mr S.B. Evans*	Dr M.E. Gillham
Prof. W.S. Lacey*	Mrs D.E.M. Paish
Dr Q.O.N. Kay*	Mr T.A.W. Davis
Mrs M.E.R. Perry*	Mr M. Porter

* Retiring member

The field meeting on Sunday was in two parts. For the first hour or so members wandered around the garden at Plas Tanybwlich with Dr Percival, who demonstrated various aspects of floral biology that she had talked about the previous day. This was much appreciated by those present.

The main meeting was to have been held in the Maentwrog woodlands, but in view of the wet weather, our leader, Mr Duncan Brown of the Nature Conservancy Council, suggested a visit to Morfa Harlech instead. This was readily agreed to and a disappointingly small party spent a pleasant day on the saltmarsh and dunes. The weather brightened considerably just after our arrival and the day turned out to be warm and sunny. One of the highlights of the meeting was the finding of a good colony of Dianthus deltoides, the Maiden Pink. This had been recorded from the site previously, but was new to those present. Our warmest thanks go to Mr Brown for leading us on what proved to be a most delightful and memorable day.

B.S.B.I. WALES QUADRENNIAL MEETING, 1978

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Meeting of Members of the Society, normally resident in Wales, will be held at St David's College, Lampeter, Dyfed, on Saturday July 22nd 1978 at 15.30 hrs.

AGENDA

1. Election of Chairman.
2. To elect a member to serve on Council.
3. Any other business.

Wales consists of the counties of Gwynedd, Clwyd, Powys, Dyfed, Gwent, Mid, South and West Glamorgan, and the vice-counties of Monmouth, Glamorgan, Brecon, Radnor, Carmarthen, Pembroke, Cardigan, Montgomery, Merioneth, Caernarfon, Denbigh, Flint and Anglesey.

Nominations of members for election to Council must be in writing, signed by two members normally resident in the Welsh Region and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate to serve if elected. Such nominations should be sent to the Honorary Secretary of the Committee for Wales, Mr R.G. Ellis, Dept. of Botany, National Museum of Wales, CARDIFF CF1 3NP, not later than 20th May 1978.

PROGRAMME

- 13.30 Meeting of the Committee for Wales.
 14.30 "Brambles: an introduction" illustrated talk by Mr E.S. Edees.
 15.30 Quadrennial meeting and 16th A.G.M. (Wales).
 16.15 Tea.
 16.45 "Plants of Glamorgan" illustrated talk by Dr M.E. Gillham.
 19.00 Dinner.
 20.00 Discussion.

Sunday, July 23rd. Field Meeting to interesting sites in the Lampeter area. (Mr A. Newton and Mr E.S. Edees will be present to give guidance on the identification of Brambles.) Meet at St David's College at 10.00 a.m.

In conjunction with the A.G.M. there will be a 4 day Bramble Foray (July 21st-24th) in the area, led by Mr A. Newton.

Accommodation is available at St David's College at approx. £6 per night, including meals.

All B.S.B.I. members are welcome and further details can be obtained from the Secretary to the Committee for Wales at the above address. Please apply before June 1st.

FIELD MEETINGS, 1978

SATURDAY, 27th MAY. GOWER, WEST GLAMORGAN (v.c. 41)

Leader: Dr Q.O.N. Kay. (This meeting is organized by the Committee for Wales). During this meeting the rich flora of the limestone cliffs of Gower will be examined.

For details please apply to Mr R.G. Ellis, Dept. of Botany, National Museum of Wales, CARDIFF CF1 3NP, before May 6th, enclosing s.a.e.

SATURDAY 8th JULY. RHOSGOCH BOG, POWYS (Radnorshire v.c. 43)

Leader: Miss A.C. Powell. (This meeting is organized by the Committee for Wales and will be a joint meeting with the Hereford Botanical Society) During the meeting a survey will be made of the vegetation of this under-worked peat bog.

For details please apply to Mr R.G. Ellis, Dept. of Botany, National Museum of Wales, CARDIFF CF1 3NP before June 19th, enclosing s.a.e.

FRIDAY 21st JULY - MONDAY 24th JULY (In conjunction with the B.S.B.I. Wales, A.G.M. on Saturday 22nd July). LAMPETER AREA - DYFED (v.c. 44 & 46).

Leader: A. Newton.

The object of this meeting is to study and record the rich and interesting Rubus flora of the area.

Accommodation is available at St David's College, Lampeter for all or part of the meeting; for details please apply to Mr R.G. Ellis, Dept. of Botany, National Museum of Wales, CARDIFF CF1 3NP before 10th June, enclosing s.a.e.

SATURDAY 2nd SEPTEMBER. CILAN HEADLAND & ABERSOCH, LLEYN PENINSULA, GWYNEDD (v.c.49)

Leader: Miss A. Conolly (This meeting is organized by the Committee for Wales) During this meeting the maritime heath and pools on Cilan Headland and maritime habitats around Abersoch will be visited.

For details please apply to Mr R.G. Ellis, Dept. of Botany, National Museum of Wales, CARDIFF CF1 3NP before August 14th, enclosing s.a.e.

"A NEW FLORA OF GWYNEDD"

M.O. Hill.

Since the days of Ray and Llwyd, North Wales has been a popular hunting ground for botanical rarities. The mountains of Snowdonia, in particular, have attracted visiting botanists. An excursion by J.J. Dillenius and S. Brewer in 1726 added about a dozen species of mountain bryophytes to the British flora and Tuberaria guttata from the coast. The cryptogamic flora of the district is particularly rich: about 10% of the species in the British bryophyte flora were first discovered in Gwynedd. But the visitors have rarely considered the commoner plants; the writing of local Floras has been left to residents.

First among these was Hugh Davies, rector of Beaumaris, whose "Welsh Botanology" (1813) not only documents the flora of Anglesey, but also provides the first comprehensive list of Welsh vernacular plant names. Davies's Flora stimulated the next generation of botanists. William Wilson (of Hymenophyllum fame), solicitor, bryologist and protégé of the older Hooker, revisited Davies's localities repeatedly from 1826 till the middle of the century, adding dozens of species to the British bryophyte flora. In the latter half of the century, easy transport by rail ensured that a stream of botanical visitors investigated many parts of the area, including the hitherto rather neglected county of Merioneth. Lichens were studied for the first time in detail, by the Rev. W.A. Leighton.

The end of the century saw the publication of J.E. Griffith's "Flora of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire" (1895), including - as had Welsh Botanology - flowering plants, pteridophytes, charophytes, bryophytes, lichens and seaweeds. Thereafter field botany entered the long, blank period of the wartime and inter-war years of the present century. No new full-sized local Flora was published for two generations. Botanists were not wholly inactive, however, and D.A. Jones (1861-1936) of Harlech, schoolmaster, bryologist and general botanist, wrote a Flora of Merioneth. This was never published, but Jones's bryophyte records were well documented and remain of great value. In the event, the county had to wait till 1961 for its first full-scale Flora, "A Contribution to a Flora of Merioneth", by P.M. Benoit and Mary Richards.

These, then, are the foundations. Other, more localized studies have considered small districts, notably Albert Wilson's (1946-7) "The Flora of a portion of north-east Caernarvonshire", which included flowering plants, pteridophytes, bryophytes and lichens, and Anne Conolly's Flora of Lleyn, which is still in preparation. Gwynedd continues to be popular with visiting naturalists, but except for Merioneth, lacks an up-to-date local Flora.

In the last two decades there has been renewed interest in bryophytes and lichens. Comprehensive bryophyte records for all six vice-counties of North Wales have been assembled in loose-leaf notebooks by myself, with copious additions by P.M. Benoit, J.G. Duckett and A.J.E. Smith, and further additions from a card index formerly maintained by Prof. P.W. Richards. The new wave of lichenologists includes two in our area who can identify almost all of these often minute plants in the field, A. Fletcher in Anglesey, and A. Pentecost working in Caernarfonshire and (latterly) Merioneth. Seaweeds have benefited less from the new enthusiasm for field botany; but thanks to the observations of W.E. Jones, the marine algal flora of Anglesey is now one of the best known in Britain.

There was therefore a notable concentration of knowledge about the non-vascular cryptogams, and a need to get it written up. "Too often", wrote the authors of the 1961 Merioneth Flora, "one hears of botanists delaying publishing their work in the hope of having it more complete, until a change of circumstances prevents it from being ever more than a manuscript". Moreover, in addition to the need for a publication covering non-vascular cryptogams, Caernarfonshire and Anglesey lack an up-to-date Flora of the vascular plants. Such a Flora had been mooted from time to time, notably during the 1930's by N. Woodhead; but the plans came to nothing. In the last few decades R.H. Roberts, W.S. Lacey and others have made numerous observations on the vascular flora of Caernarfonshire and Anglesey, but with no definite plan to publish the results.

The time is therefore ripe for a new local Flora, and the new county of Gwynedd, including the vice-counties Merioneth, Caernarfonshire and Anglesey, is an appropriate unit. Accordingly, on 10 August 1976 a group of six interested people got together to make preparations for a new Flora of Gwynedd. In the year that has elapsed since then, the original group of six has been augmented to a committee of eleven, including two representatives of the National Museum of Wales. The present position (July 1977) is that field work is continuing, with the intention of bringing the vascular plant records up to date. Cryptogamic groups are largely ready for writing up.

Details of the format are not yet fixed. In terms of publishing, the main problem is that of producing something that is sufficiently popular to attract the ordinary field botanist, while at the same time continuing the tradition of including the lower cryptogams. The increase of cryptogamic knowledge has much augmented the number of species to be included. For example, Griffith was able to deal with the liverworts in a mere four pages. Nowadays 204 species of liverworts are known from Gwynedd, almost all being good non-critical species. Likewise, he covered seaweeds in 20 pages; nowadays there are 600 species. Griffith's Flora had 173 pages dealing with vascular plants and 107 with the rest - a reasonable balance for a moderately popular work. The problem that confronts us is that there are now about 2,200 species of lower cryptogams, compared with 1,100 species of vascular plants. How this problem will be solved is still uncertain, but B.S.B.I. members will be pleased to learn that we are determined not to let the higher plants be lost in a crowd of cryptogams.

COTONEASTER INTEGERRIMUS - A CONSERVATION EXERCISE

M. Morris.

Today the Great Orme is well known for its interesting and rare plants and has become the Mecca of botanists visiting North Wales. This, however, has not always been the case, for such prominent botanists as John Ray, Edward Llywd, Dillenius and others who collected plants in the early eighteenth century never included this headland in their itineraries.

The town of Llandudno did not then exist and the area consisted of only a few miners' and fishermen's cottages. Perhaps the reason why it was by-passed by these early botanists was its relative isolation at the time. Visitors even today travel to the town of Llandudno rather than through it.

It was not until 1783 that Cotoneaster integerrimus was first discovered on the Great Orme by John Wynn Griffith of Garn, and the discovery made public by William Wilson, the mycologist from Warrington. A great many botanists must have visited the area since those days and some of them with one specific aim: to see this very rare plant and obtain a specimen for their herbaria.

Unfortunately, the vigour of the half dozen or so plants did not match the avidity of these specimen collectors, coupled possibly by the depredations of their young growth by the resident feral goats which roam on the Great Orme throughout the year.

In the course of the past twenty years I have noted a gradual deterioration in all but one of the plants and there has been no evidence of natural regeneration, either vegetative or from seed. Although the most robust of the plants does produce a few suckers any extension of the new growth is restricted by the isolated nature of the habitat. Consequently, I decided that if some form of conservation was not undertaken soon C. integerrimus would become one more name on the extinct list.

In July 1970 three half-ripe cuttings were taken and placed in John Innes rooting compost in a clay pot and covered with a polythene bag. The three failed to root. The following year, three more cuttings were taken and given to a professional horticulturalist to root under mist propagation conditions. These three also failed to root. In 1972 no further attempt was made with cuttings as I felt that taking cuttings which failed to root was doing more harm than good.

After considering other methods of propagation, I decided to air-layer a thin twig approximately fifteen inches long that grew on the underside of the strongest of the plants. This was done in August 1973 under very cramped conditions and with the knowledge that I was doing surgery on one of the national rarities. The operation completed, I left the scene dripping with sweat and with a rather troubled conscience. In the following months I returned twice to check the black polythene wrapper and the general condition of the twig. All appeared to be well.

On the 24th April 1974 when the wrapper was carefully opened a few very thin white strands of water roots were discovered in the still-moist sphagnum. The twig was severed and planted with the moss undisturbed in John Innes potting compost in a clay pot. For the first few days it was covered with a large plastic bag and placed in a light airy conservatory out of direct sun. By the 19th of May, there was evidence of new leaf growth, the polythene bag was discarded and the plant was placed outside in a sheltered position. Three weeks later, further leaf growth indicated that the plant had successfully established itself in the soil medium. It was then planted out in light loam to which some limestone chippings had been added.

Twelve months later the twig had developed into a bushy form and bore eleven seeds. It also produced strong new growth from the base. This new growth showed much more vigour than had been observed on any of the plants on the Orme.

In April 1976 an attempt was made to layer four of these, using John Innes compost. All four failed to root, probably due to the very dry summer. Fortunately, no harm was done and the four layered branches continued to grow.

In August, two cuttings of ripe wood with a heel were taken and placed in old tomato compost. The two rooted successfully. One of these rooted cuttings is now approximately twelve inches high and bushy, and is ready for replanting on its native Great Orme. This will be done in the early autumn when the danger of excessive summer heat has passed.

It is now anticipated that several plants can be propagated from the stock plant and returned to well-chosen localities on the Orme.

This conservation exercise will be completed when these new introductions are seen to be fully established on the limestone headland of the Great Orme where they belong.

BRYN EURYN, COLWYN BAY, v.c. 50, DENBIGH
J.M. Brummitt.

Perhaps twenty-five thousand years ago, when the warmer weather came and the great ice sheets which had covered the land of North Wales and the waters of the Irish Sea finally melted away, the rush of melt water off the land gouged out deep, steep-sided channels in the soft shales and left the long ridge of coastal limestone pierced and broken into huge masses. One of the smaller of these isolated limestone blocks is Bryn Euryn at the end of what is now Colwyn Bay. Its limestone strata slope gently down to the north, but to the south the deep melt water channel of Nant Sempyr left a line of cliffs and steep slopes above the Silurian shales exposed beneath.

Nowadays for those with an interest in plants and animals there is much to see on Bryn Euryn. Over two hundred and fifty species of flowering plant have been found there, and while many are of course widespread and common, some species are quite rare. This wealth of flowers has three main causes: limestone usually supports a rich diversity of characteristic plants; the climate close to the sea on the west coast is mild so that many plants and animals more typical of the south can live here too; there is a wide range of habitats — woods, grassland, scrub, steep slopes and cliffs, each with its own typical plants.

Spring begins early on Bryn Euryn, and usually in January or February it is possible to find the first of the spring ephemerals, although most are not fully out until April or May. Then you may see whitlow grass, danish scurvy-grass, three-fingered saxifrage, early forget-me-not, thyme-leaved sandwort, dark green mouse-eared chickweed and a rich range of small dandelions.

If you climb Bryn Euryn from Colwyn Bay you walk first through moist ash woods with a varied ground flora including stinking iris, and hart's-tongue fern, and then out onto open grassland with wide views round from Blackpool Tower to the mountains of Snowdonia. The limestone grassland here is a rich carpet of species, and in their season you will see thyme, ladies bedstraw, ploughman's spikenard, dropwort, cowslips, rockrose, early purple and green-winged orchids, common spotted orchids, and pyramidal orchids as well as many others. On the steeper slopes near the top are yellow wort, mountain St John's wort, centaury, kidney vetch, meadow rue and hairy violet.

Along the edges of the cliffs you will see plants such as stonecrops, scabious, bloody cranesbill, hairy rockcress, soft trefoil, and also some of

the less common plants. Besides the wind-pruned bushes of juniper, and the white sprays of the Nottingham catchfly, there are the dense cushions of the hoary rockrose, and in the rock crevices hawkweeds with large yellow flowers rather like dandelions. There are four species of hawkweed here, and like the hoary rockrose they are found in few places in Britain although here they are abundant and conspicuous.

If you make your way down below the cliffs to the steep, sunny, south-west side you will come to a rich jungle of trees and bushes which find conditions to their liking there. There are many yew trees and an undergrowth of spindle-tree, spurge laurel, wild privet, wild roses, and climbing up through these thickets are plants of wild madder, honeysuckle and old man's beard. Among the plants on the ground in the wood are the pale wood violet, ivy broomrape and a rare dandelion.

Besides these plants which might be expected on such a hill there are occasional plants of uncommon species; milk-vetch, Carex leersii, slender thistle, alexanders, milk-thistle, saw-wort and lesser chickweed (Stellaria pallida).

Of course any area with such a range of plants will be expected to support a similarly distinguished range of animals, and although, besides people and their dogs, wary rabbits and hunting cats are the only vertebrates you are likely to see, there is a wealth of insect life and for the entomologist a hot moist day on Bryn Euryn is very rewarding. Some of its insects, too, are very uncommon.

On a single visit you may see Bryn Euryn as very natural and unspoiled, but in fact changes are occurring, some quite rapidly and certainly harmfully.

Firstly, the development of Colwyn Bay around the base of the hill has brought about a huge increase in the number of visitors and with it the appearance of well-worn paths, trampled areas, bunches of bluebells and orchids being carried away.

Secondly, from the gardens of Colwyn Bay has come an influx of non-native species, carried by birds or the wind. Some, such as mexican fleabane and the rosy stonecrop, are small and attractive, perhaps welcome additions, but others such as the whitebeams, three cotoneasters and the holm-oak are fast-growing plants which can soon dominate and eliminate the native species.

Thirdly, it is possible that we are now seeing the effects of the introduction of myxomatosis twenty years ago. It is still possible to find dying, swollen rabbits, but the removal of their grazing pressure has allowed shrubby plants to invade much of the once-extensive limestone grassland so that it has degenerated into an impenetrable thicket of a few species, notably sloe, gorse, and, peculiarly, our native oak. In attempts to reverse these changes the Conservation Corps and the Colwyn Council have organized scrub clearance days, but the problem is far from overcome.

Then, the dry summer of last year devastated the plants on the thin soil of the south-facing slopes, and large areas were dead and brown by May (as they were again this year!). Even deep-rooted plants such as the rock-roses were killed in large numbers, and in the bare areas produced in this way appeared hosts of groundsel, beaked hawk's beard, valerian and dyer's rocket.

Perhaps this is only a short-term change and when we go back to our usual, wetter summers, the natives will return.

There is always much to see on Bryn Euryn, and perhaps even more to find. Sixty years ago A.A. Dallman recorded ladies tresses orchids, cat's foot, spring cinquefoil and others, but no one has seen them recently. And then why do other species, common not too far away, such as spiked speedwell and rock hut-chinsia, not grow there? Perhaps on a visit someone will look in the right place at the right time, and make Bryn Euryn an even more fascinating place!

Editor's Note: A Nature Trail has now been set up in the area described by Mr Brummitt. It is based on the existing paths, and a very attractive, illustrated guide to Bryn Euryn has been produced by Messrs J.M. Brummitt and H.N. Michaelis of the Conwy Valley Branch of the North Wales Naturalists' Trust. The Guide is available from the NWNT office, 154 High Street, Bangor, at 20p + 7p postage.

SHORT NOTES:

BOTANICAL RECORDING IN PEMBROKESHIRE

T.A.W. Davis.

Recording in Pembrokeshire relied on casual records of residents and visitors and a few site lists, or, from visiting botanists on holiday, an occasional general list until in 1973 the Nature Conservancy began the survey of natural or little-disturbed habitats. Practically the whole of the rocky coast was surveyed in 1973 and the coastal survey has continued so that salt marshes and sand dunes have also received attention. In 1976 P.M. Benoit was employed for a fortnight to survey wetlands in the St David's area, SM72 (excluding Dowrog Common). He examined sixteen moors and bogs that previously were little known.

The surveys have added much to our knowledge of the distribution of a number of uncommon plants which were considered rare, but have proved to be more widespread. An example is Isolepis cernua which was recorded in six coastal localities and four moors at St David's. First or second records, 1st or 2nd localised records and a first post-1930 record were made for ten species: Juniperus communis (2nd, 1st on mainland), Vicia sylvatica (2nd), Sorbus torminalis (2nd, found in several coastal oak woods), Blackstonia perfoliata (2nd localised), Cirsium acaulon (1st), Zannichellia palustris (1st localised), Eleocharis quinqueflora (2nd), E. uniglumis (1st and 2nd), Carex lasiocarpa (1st) and Glyceria maxima (1st localised). In the St David's area Peter Benoit found Equisetum x litorale, a 2nd record, at three sites, and Juncus acutiflorus x articulatus, a first record, at six sites.

THE BOTANICAL WORK OF JANET MACNAIR

Phyllis A. Parr.

In 1975 botanists suffered a sad loss in the death of Janet Macnair. Fortunately she had not merely devoted many years to painstaking and expert work in the field, but had made an extensive record of her findings in her County of Montgomery.

Personally I hardly knew her, for I moved into her area very shortly before she became ill, but her capability as a naturalist - not only as a botanist, incidentally - was immediately apparent when one was with her in the field.

For her work she was greatly appreciated by many naturalists and not only by friends of her immediate circle. These latter, however, decided that there should be some worthy memorial to a much respected woman and a fund was set up to serve this purpose. The move originally came from within the Montgomeryshire Field Society, founded by Miss Macnair in 1946, and for which she worked tirelessly until illness stopped her.

Members of the Field Society subscribed well to the memorial fund, and when Dr Franklyn Perring suggested that Janet's records should be published, it was decided that there could be no more fitting a memorial.

Now with the help of generous gifts and loans from other interested bodies and a lot of hard work on the part of a number of Janet's old associates, 'Plants of Montgomeryshire' has been produced and published under the aegis of the Montgomeryshire Field Society and the North Wales Naturalists' Trust.

Readers of the Welsh Bulletin may like to know that this Flora is available from Miss Mary Hignett, 8 Oak Street, Oswestry, Salop and N.W.N.T. Office at 154 High Street, Bangor, Gwynedd, at 65p + 15p postage.

Note: 'Plants of Montgomeryshire - the Field Records of Janet Macnair' was published in 1977. It was edited by Mary Hignett and Prof. William S. Lacey. The onerous task of arranging the records and making additions from other sources (including some records made since Miss Macnair's death, and supplied by Mrs Phyllis Parr) was undertaken by Peter Benoit and Miss Doris Pugh. There is a Foreword by Dr Franklyn Perring, a note on Conservation of the flora of the county by Roger Lovegrove, and the cover has a charming sketch of Cloudberry drawn by Peter Benoit. - Editor.

OBITUARY - MRS MARY RICHARDS, M.B.E., M.Sc.

It is with great regret that we report the death of Mrs Mary Richards, of Dolgellau, in August, 1977, at the age of 92. Her botanical work in Merionethshire is well-known and resulted in the excellent production "A Contribution to a Flora of Merioneth" written jointly with Peter Benoit. Her most important field work was carried out in Zambia. There she devoted twenty-three years to botanical exploration and made important collections of plants, many of which are now at Kew. Among them were many species new to science. In recognition of these services to botany she was awarded an honorary M.Sc. by the University of Wales and later an M.B.E. An account and appreciation of Mary Richards, written by William Condry, appeared in the March, 1975, issue of 'Nature in Wales'.