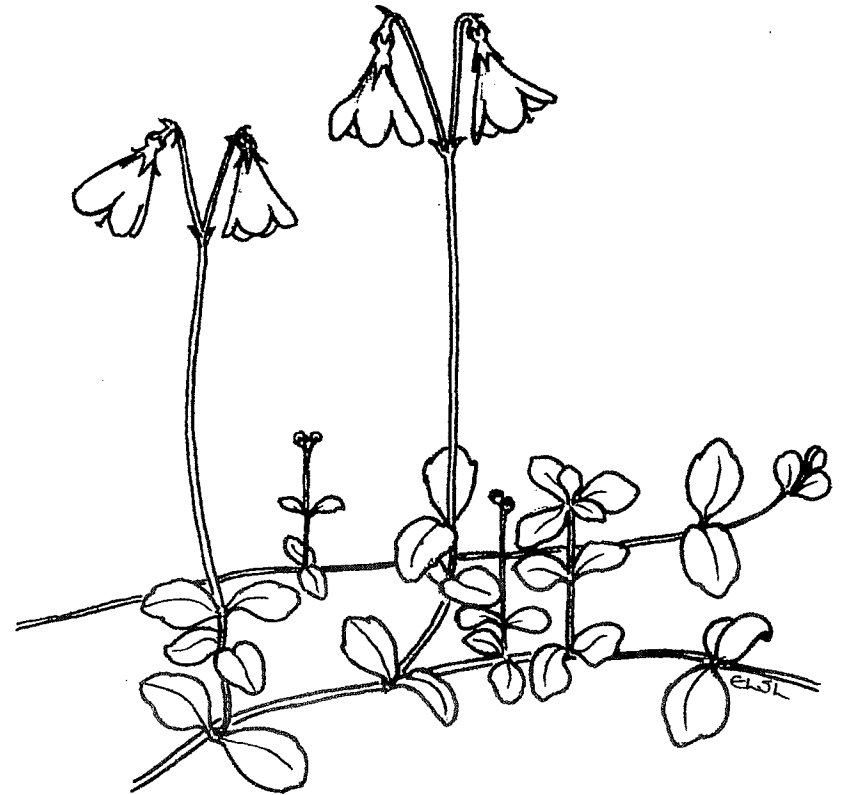


**BSBI**

**Scottish Newsletter**

**2011**

**No 33**



**Twinflower**

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# BSBI SCOTTISH NEWSLETTER

Number 33

Spring 2011

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## Editorial

A full obituary for Dr Barbara Ballinger was published in the *BSBI YEARBOOK 2011* (Dean 2011), but we thought it appropriate to recognise her contribution to Scottish botany in our *Scottish Newsletter*, and an Appreciation will be found on page 10.

Professionally, I know the importance of using the latest technology in order to obtain the correct diagnosis and this is equally necessary in other spheres, but I am sure that for many of us the changes in nomenclature between Stace 1997 and 2010 were unwelcome! Sincere thanks are due to Messrs Ellis & Pearman (2010) for providing Tables of the changes, thereby making it much easier to know where an alteration to one's records is necessary. As most readers will be more familiar with the earlier names, where there has been a change, I have given both, one in square brackets.

This year, for the first time, we have had submitted two unsolicited reports from participants at training field meetings. It is gratifying to read that that they were considered to be excellent.

As usual, I am grateful to John Hawell for proof reading, Gwynn Ellis for supplying address labels and Jackie Muscott for organising the photocopying and despatch of the Newsletter. JH always finds typographical errors; it is so easy to read what one is expected to see. In a BSBI sister publication recently, a recorder stated that his recording had been restricted in 2010 on account of a slipped dish!

During a week in which I was much involved with the current issue, one of the clues in The Herald newspaper cryptic crossword was 'A bulletin from a novel southern landlord'. For anyone unfamiliar with such pastimes, the answer will be found on page 39.

Elsbeth Lindsay was invited to draw a cover illustration. She chose, as a favourite, Twinflower and this actually complements the Cairngorm article. It was drawn from slides which we took in Glen Fee.

## References.

- Dean, M (2011). Dr Barbara Ballinger (1941-2010). *BSBI YEARBOOK 2011*, 72-73.  
Ellis, B & Pearman, D (2010). New names and taxa in the third edition of Stace. *BSBI News* 115, 3-14.  
Stace, CA (1997). *New flora of the British Isles* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Cambridge University Press.  
Stace, CA (2010). *New flora of the British Isles* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). Cambridge University Press.

All submissions now come by E-mail, my daughter Lorna kindly acting as recipient as below. Please let me have items by the end of February 2012.

[Lorna.macpherson@ntlworld.com](mailto:Lorna.macpherson@ntlworld.com)

Peter Macpherson, "Ben Alder", 15 Lubnaig Road, Glasgow G43 2RY

## Chairman's Report at the BSBI Annual Meeting, Edinburgh, 6 November 2010

CHRIS MILES

The Scottish Committee held 2 meetings over the past year. As well as organising the annual meeting and ensuring a good range of field meetings we discussed a range of other issues.

### Biosecurity

In light of the ongoing concern about introduced diseases and some worrying developments in *Phytophthora* outbreaks both in England and in Scotland the committee discussed the issue of biosecurity and whether the BSBI should provide some guidance to members and recorders about any simple precautions they might need to take when accessing the countryside. It may for example be possible to update the BSBI Code of Conduct for field work.

### Rare Plant Registers

Given the demand from developers and landuse planners for good environmental information it was agreed that there is a need for a new push to encourage the production of Rare Plant Registers (RPR) in Scotland. Wales has at least a draft RPR for each of their 13 VCs already. The challenge for the Committee is that in Scotland there are 44 VC's and only 6 have RPRs at the moment. The BSBI recording strategy sets a target to complete draft RPRs for all VCs by 2019. It was agreed that VCRs would need to be encouraged to focus on this task next year. In order to do so the committee agreed that a small working group would be needed to support this happening.

### Wild Flower introductions

At our last meeting we were alerted to sites where the Woodland Trust were sowing wild flower seeds to establish a greater diversity in woodland sites. The question posed was whether BSBI should be concerned about this action by a conservation body. Clearly this has the ability to give rise to unexpected populations of plants though for the most part such sowings are short lived. The discussion led to a question about whether BSBI firstly had a stance on such actions and secondly whether it took a view on recording such events.

### VCR appointments

As reported last year we gave some consideration to the way vacancies for VCRs is applied, not to change the way this has been done in the past but to ensure it is done consistently and transparently. We have nearly agreed written guidelines which in essence ensure that all vacancies are advertised (*BSBI News*, Scottish BSBI web pages) and give a minimum period for expressions of interest

to be made. Nominations are of course encouraged for single or joint VCRs. Once discussed, Scottish Committee will then make a recommendation to Records Committee who make the formal appointment.

VCRs appointed this year

Barbara Sumner has recently been formally appointed as Recorder in Midlothian VC 83 replacing Douglas McKean who is retiring. Sandy Edwards has been formally appointed as joint recorder with George Ballantyne in Fife & Kinross VC 85. Ian Francis was appointed to S. Aberdeenshire VC 92, while Mick Crawley has been appointed on to Sutherland VC 107 (rather a long way from his other VC in Berkshire VC 22!). He replaces Morven Murray who is retiring. Congratulations are due to all new appointees. And we thank the retiring recorders, Morven and Douglas and hope that they will stay involved. With these appointments the Scottish VCR network is 100% complete for the first time that I can remember. However a number of Recorders have given notice of retirement, whilst others have asked for help by way of joint recordership. These positions will be advertised in due course.

#### **BSBI/BSS Scottish Annual Meeting, 2010**

JANE MACKINTOSH

The BSBI/BSS Scottish Annual Meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup> was a great success, with nearly 120 enthusiastic delegates filling the lecture theatre at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, viewing the exhibits in the conference room, joining the lunchtime tours, browsing through the Summerfield Books display and meeting friends.

**Heather McHaffie, RBGE Conservation Officer**, welcomed delegates and told us about some recent work at the Garden, including a project to scan herbarium specimens so that every type specimen held by RBGE will be available for public viewing over the internet.

**Chris Miles, Chair, BSBI Scottish Committee**, announced the sad news of the death of Barbara Ballinger, vice-chair of the BSBI Scottish Committee until recently. He also introduced lunchtime tours to the Herbarium and the Scottish Rare Plant Collection and thanked the BSS organisers.

**Michael Braithwaite, BSBI President**, talked about the BSBI's future recording plans and emphasised the need to record location details and the need to share skills and records. *The Rare Plants Register* will be linked to Google Earth and made available to Scottish Natural Heritage. The next Atlas will get underway next year (2011) and is planned for the end of the decade. The BSBI has

prepared a booklet, *Recording the British and Irish flora 2010-2020* (available on the BSBI website), outlining its programme of recording, surveillance and monitoring activities for the decade.

**Barbara Sumner, BSS President**, described the Community Woodlands Project, which had the two aims of scientific recording and botanical outreach. At each wood visited, BSS volunteers, along with community woodland volunteers, recorded the vascular plants and the structure of the wood by the age classes of the woody species. The woods visited fell into four categories: originally open country, originally industrial sites, conifer woodland and estate woodlands. Ideally the ground flora will be re-assessed annually and the age class analysis repeated every 10 years or so. Barbara thanked all those involved with the project.

**Jeff Waddell, Forest Enterprise Scottish Open Habitats Ecologist**, explained the structure of Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and the National Forest Estate, Scotland's publicly owned forest, which covers 8.5% of the country. Two thirds of this is woodland and one third open land. FCS is restoring ancient semi-natural woodlands which were under-planted with conifers in the past, improving the condition of other ancient woodlands and expanding the area of woodland of native species. Jeff thanked the BSBI for supplying species records and showed how detailed locality records allow FCS staff to avoid damaging species during forestry operations.

**Kevin Walker, BSBI Head of Research & Development**, talked about county floras and illustrated their changing style from the early unsystematic lists of sites through the rather dull sets of tetrad maps of the 60s to the recent *Flora of Hertfordshire* with systematic repeat tetrad mapping, interesting species accounts and discussions of change. He showed how species losses vary across the country and are related to the human population. BSBI records are very valuable – this year they contributed to a report to Government on local extinctions in England.

**Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer**, reported on the year's activities. Memory Map is being made available to every VC recorder who wants it and new data sets, such as SSSI boundaries, will be provided in 2011. A huge effort is being made to digitise nearly one million records by the end of the financial year and all records will be made available on-line through the BSBI distribution maps and the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway. 2010, the Year of Biodiversity, saw one of the fullest field meeting programmes ever. Jim illustrated some of the highlights of his year, including trips to St Kilda and Mar Lodge. He thanked SNH, RBGE and BSBI for their support, as well as all volunteers, and finished by saying that he is now working on his next grant.

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**Richard Clarkson, National Trust for Scotland property manager at Grey Mare's Tail**, described his site. This is the most notable site in southern Scotland for montane and sub-montane plant communities, with eight communities of European importance and 12 nationally rare or regionally scarce vascular plants. The site is managed according to the Trust's wild land policy but also has large numbers of sheep as well as feral goats so grazing levels must be reduced. Fences have been erected to protect Downy Willow (*Salix lapponum*) and flushes with Alpine Foxtail (*Alopecurus alpinus*). Oblong Woodsia (*Woodsia ilvensis*) has been transplanted onto scree in the enclosure, where it is doing well so far.

**Angus Hannah, BSBI Recorder for the Clyde Islands**, introduced the concept of axiophytes - valuable plants - and the way in which they can help to define good sites objectively. You choose good habitats within your locality, list species more or less restricted to the habitat, exclude aliens, casuals and any species occurring in more than 25% of tetrads, and the rest are axiophytes. The number of axiophytes in a locality as a proportion of the total species gives an assessment of quality.

**Alison Murfitt, BTCV Natural Talent Apprentice**, based with the National Trust for Scotland and RBGE, talked about her work on CHEG fungi - that's Clavarioids (fairy clubs), Hygrocybes (waxcaps), Entoloma (pinkgills) and Geoglossacea (earthtongues). They are found in short, unimproved or semi-improved grasslands with a long history of grazing or mowing, Puzzlingly, there seems to be no relationship between the diversity of CHEG species and vascular plant species-richness. The UK holds the best waxcap grasslands in the world but the decline of hill grazing seems to lead to longer swards and a decline in the fungi. Kew Gardens are developing a soil sampling system to investigate whether they are still abundant underground.

The question and answer session dealt with the topics of storing paper archives - give them to your local archive - and of species names - 'Stace 3' is recommended until the BSBI compiles a list of preferred names.

Finally, **Fred Rumsey** gave a well illustrated talk on in-breeding and hybridisation in British ferns and asked the audience to go out and find him more interesting fern hybrids. DNA bar-coding does not work too well on ferns so it is good to hear that traditional taxonomy is still necessary.

**Acknowledgement.** This report has been modified, with permission from the author (editor), from the original version which appeared in *BSS News* No. 96, March 2011.

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## **Draft Minutes of the BSBI Scottish AGM held at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, at 12 noon on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

### **Welcome**

The Chairman, Chris Miles, welcomed all to the BSBI Scottish AGM. He announced the very sad passing of Barbara Ballinger, who was a huge supporter of BSBI, both in her role as a joint VCR and as a Scottish Committee member and past vice chair. She will, without doubt, be greatly missed, both for her expertise in the field and for her very personal touch.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Chris Baker, Deborah Long, Lindsay Mackinlay and Catriona Murray.

### **Minutes of AGM 2009**

The minutes of the 2009 AGM (published in the *Scottish Newsletter* 2010 No. 32) were approved as a true record of the meeting.

### **Business arising - none**

### **Chairman's report**

The Chair delivered his report on the activities of the Scottish Committee and the work of the BSBI in Scotland. For a full account see the article on page three of this newsletter. The Committee has responsibility for the Scottish Annual Meeting and field meetings, but in addition it has been considering the following:

**Biosecurity** in relation spreading of diseases such as *Phytophthora*. How this issue relates to recorders in the field is to be raised at the full BSBI Council meeting in the near future.

**Rare Plants Registers (RPRs)**. These should become a very useful tool for land-use planners and have a beneficial effect on rare plant populations. Scotland has 44 VCs and only 6 have RPRs currently. The aim is that all VCs have RPRs by 2019. The Scottish Committee is setting up a small group, including those who have already produced RPRs to carry this project forward.

**Wild Flower Introductions**. This topic arose from a communication letting the Committee know that the Woodland Trust has been sowing wild flowers in some of its properties to increase biodiversity. It is thought that this may well result in unexpected populations of certain species, though many of these will be short lived. There is an issue regarding the recording of such events. The question has also been raised as to whether BSBI has a stance on this type of management.

**Appointment of VCRs**. The Committee has produced a draft of a set of guide-

lines relating to the appointment of VCRs in Scotland, in order that the procedure can be seen as consistent and transparent. These suggested guidelines include the recommendation that all VCR vacancies are advertised in BSBI publications with a realistic period of time for responses. Thereafter, if no nominations are received, the Committee can make recommendations. The BSBI Records Committee makes the final decisions.

Since the last AGM, the following people have been appointed:

Barbara Sumner VC 83 Midlothian following the retiral of Douglas McKean; Sandy Edwards, jointly with George Ballantyne VC 85 Fife and Kinross; Ian Francis VC 92 S. Aberdeenshire and Mick Crawley VC 107 E. Sutherland following the retiral of Morven Murray.

The Chair warmly thanked all the VCRs for their huge time commitment and efforts, describing them as the bedrock of the BSBI. No VC is without a recorder at the moment, retirals do take place and the Committee is very keen to offer individual VCRs support in the form of a joint recorder, who are proving to be a boon where they exist.

#### **Scottish Newsletter report**

Peter Macpherson reported that Issue 32 had been distributed on time earlier this year and he reminded members that the deadline for submissions for the Spring 2011 newsletter is the end of February. These include reports, articles, notices of future field meetings and courses, and when appropriate, obituaries. It is best to send submissions to Peter Macpherson electronically, preferably by email via his daughter, Lorna, as detailed in the editorial.

Regarding the last issue, thanks were expressed to Jackie Muscott for photocopying and despatch.

The Chairman thanked Peter Macpherson for his preparation of the newsletter.

#### **Field Meetings 2010 and 2011**

Mark Watson reported that 2010 had been a bumper year for field meetings and extended thanks to all the leaders. Meetings had catered for all levels of botanical ability. The meetings were very well attended, and in some cases over-subscribed. Dates for 2011 are fixed apart from an arable weeds meeting in the Borders. There are no meetings scheduled for May, but more in August than in the past. A montane meeting, jointly with BSS is planned. The island meeting will be on the Isle of Skye. It is hoped to add in a meeting led by John Poland, based on his Vegetative Key. In addition, Nick Stewart is being asked to contribute a meeting focussing on pondweeds, based at Kindrogan. MW thanked potential leaders for their offers of help for next year.

The Chair reminded leaders of field meetings that reports are required after each field meeting and these should be forwarded electronically to Jill Sutcliffe (not Jane Croft as previously).

#### **Scottish Committee Nominations**

Following the recent death of Barbara Ballinger and the retiral of Alistair Godfrey, there were two vacancies. Alistair was thanked for the sterling job he did serving on the Committee for the last six years, and particularly for his work as Exhibition Secretary.

As there were no nominations resulting from the advertisement, the Scottish Committee recommended two members, both environmental consultants, to the membership. Chris Baker and Ruth McGuire were both proposed by Jane Jones and seconded by Ian Evans, and were duly elected on to the Committee.

#### **AOCB**

There being no other competent business, the meeting was formally closed at 12.35 p.m.

#### **BSBI SCOTTISH COMMITTEE 2010 / 2011**

Voting-members:

Dr CJ Miles (*Chair*), Mrs DM Dahl (*Hon. Sec.*), Mrs JR Jones (*Treasurer*), Dr MF Watson (*Field Secretary*), Mr MC Robinson (*Exhibition Secretary*), Mr Chris Baker, Mr LW Gaskell, Mr A Godfrey, Mrs Elizabeth Lavery, Miss Ruth McGuire.

Non-voting:

Mr R Payne (*SNH Representative*), Mr K Harding (*Botanical Society of Scotland Representative*), Dr D Long (*Plantlife Representative*), [Mr LA Mackinlay (*National Trust for Scotland*), written reports only]

Attending:

Mr JW McIntosh (*BSBI Scottish Officer*).

At the AGM on 5th November 2011 Dot Dahl, Luke Gaskell and Martin Robinson retire but are eligible for re-election. Nominations for the Committee, signed by two members of the Society normally resident in, or recorders for, a vice-county in Scotland and with the written consent of the candidate, who must also qualify as above, should reach the under noted at Easter Ballindalloch, Comrie, Crief, PH6 2LY by 30th September, 2011.

Dot Dahl (Hon. Sec.) [dotdahl@talk21.com](mailto:dotdahl@talk21.com)

## An Appreciation of Barbara Ballinger

Barbara sadly died in October 2010 and an obituary appeared in *The BSBI Yearbook 2011*. It reflects on her dedication supporting the work of the BSBI in Scotland as a vice-county recorder in Easter Ross, jointly with husband Brian, and what they jointly achieved as recorders. On top of her other work Barbara had joined the Scottish BSBI Committee in 2008 and this appreciation comes first from Chris Miles and then from Dot Dahl on behalf of the committee.

"I remember that Barbara brought quiet enthusiasm with her when she joined the committee. She was always ready to give balanced and constructive input and ideas for how the issues under discussion could be addressed. She was intuitively interested in topics like the spread of *Phytophthora* sp. and the debate about the golf development at Menie. The committee of course spend some effort to get the annual meeting right and Barbara and Brian were regular contributors of displays at these. I remember them giving a talk about their work on *Pyrola* identification from vegetative characters. It was a double headed performance given in good humour but with attention to detail as would be expected from such professionals. It was just the right kind of talk for the occasion. I was very pleased when Barbara agreed to become Vice Chair and it is a great pity her stay on the committee was so short".

"I joined the Scottish Committee when Barbara was already a committee member for which she became Vice Chair. Barbara was so enthusiastic about all she did and, thus she was inspirational. She had an acute mind, but was always measured in her responses to issues. She truly loved her recording role, adding some invertebrates to her expertise. I remember a talk she gave, with Brian, to the Perthshire Society for Natural Sciences, Botanical Section, entitled "4 Woods and a Pond". It brought home to me how committed she was to conservation. She and Brian had actually bought 4 woods and a pond and were managing them purely with conservation in mind. There was Barbara in the photos wielding a huge chainsaw to remove unwanted trees to open up the canopy! I was intrigued and delighted to experience even a little of her enthusiasm. I am really pleased that I met Barbara and was so engaged by her. Her dedication to plant recording was second to none, and her enthusiasm really rubbed off."

## Scottish Annual Meeting 2010 – Exhibit Abstracts Compiled by MC Robinson

### A Fife mixed bag

GH Ballantyne

The main exhibit, entitled "Two for the Price of One" comprised two unusual knotgrasses (*Polygonum*) found at Tentsmuir on the NE coast of Fife and suggested that the *P. oxyspermum*, ssp *oxyspermum* perhaps confirms the taxon as being native in Britain; and it noted that *P. polycnemiforme* (a segregate of *P. aviculare*) also occurs. (see also article on page 24). Other species discovered in the same area, a rapidly developing saltmarsh, included Frog Rush (*Juncus ranarius*) and Slender Spike-rush (*Eleocharis uniglumis*), both rare in the county.

Two 'proper' grasses new to VC 85 were also shown: Hungarian Brome (*Bromus inermis*) and the Common Couch subspecies (*Elytrigia repens* ssp *arenosus*), along with two rare rushes Round-fruited Rush (*Juncus compressus*) and Slender Rush (*J. tenuis*).

(Thanks are due to Bill Hay for collecting many of the plants mentioned.)

### A Berwickshire BSBI Botanical Site Register

Michael Braithwaite

A conventional printed CRPR presents the data species-by-species. This may be unfriendly to conservationists and to the planning of repeat recording. My current project is a 'second generation' CRPR that presents data site-by-site within hectads. I soon found that data tables for rare and scarce species alone were not satisfying. So I have added data at decreasing levels of detail for 'selected axiophytes' and 'other axiophytes'. Details of former rare and scarce species are also listed. Each site has a brief habitat note and a grading. A separate descriptive section gives an overview of each hectad with a map localising the sites. A digital version will allow species-by-species data to be obtained. A rolling programme of repeat recording is updating the data hectad by hectad. 60% of the VC has been repeat-recorded since 2004 when a CRPR was published.

### By whom was the Berwickshire (VC 81) flora discovered and when?

Michael Braithwaite

Charts were presented to show the date of the first localised record for the Berwickshire flora grouped into native species, archaeophytes, neophytes, casuals, hybrids and the rest (microspecies and infraspecific taxa). The date of the 'first localised record' for many widespread species is very much later than the 'first

record' in the early floras. 'Full' native species are still being discovered: 26 since 1970. For example *Convallaria majalis* (Lily of the Valley) was first found in 2009. The publications of 'CTW' in 1952 and 'Stace' in 1991 alongside the two BSBI Atlas projects were seen as major stimuli to the discovery of neophytes and hybrids. A few specialists had made important contributions to the recording of *Hieracium* (hawkweeds), *Rubus* (brambles), and *Taraxacum* (dandelions). Intraspecific taxa remain much under-worked. Over the 239 years from 1740 to 1978 an average of 5 taxa have been added per year, over the 32 years from 1979 to 2010 an average of 15 taxa have been added per year.

### **Some plant records from Roxburgh (VC 80) and Selkirk (VC 79): 2010**

Rod Corner

#### VC 79

Floating Club-rush (*Eleogiton fluitans*). A second v-c record by Jeff Waddell from near Selkirk.

#### VC 80.

A Lady's-mantle (*Alchemilla tythantha*). Only known in the vice-county from a single site by the Ettrick since 1984.

Sand Leek (*Allium scorodoprasum*). Reinstated to the vice-county as a new native population from near Yetholm.

Delicate Michaelmas-daisy (*Aster concinnus*). A new v-c record by ME Braithwaite. It is described in edition 3 of Stace.

Purple Small-reed (*Calamagrostis canescens*). A new site for this rare Scottish grass.

Rough Horsetail (*Equisetum hyemale*). From the only known extant site discovered by the late David Ellis in 1996.

Spreading Mouse-ear-hawkweed (*Pilosella flagellaris*). A new site for this almost exclusively railway plant within the v-c.

Olive Willow (*Salix elaeagnos*). This striking planted willow was first found by the late Margaret Little near Selkirk in 1996 and remains the only record.

### **Crop escapees to look out for: a sales catalogue**

Rod Corner

A commercial catalogue lists a large number of plant species used for "Game Cover, Environmental Stewardship and Forage Seeds." Some escape into the wild and may be confusing.

### **Brown Sedge (*Carex disticha*) new to Mull**

Rod Corner

A large healthy colony was found in July 2010 in NW Mull on the Glengorm Castle Estate.

### **Corn Marigold (*Glebionis [Chrysanthemum] segetum*) Threatened Plant Project in Fife (VC 85)**

Sandy Edwards

Corn Marigold was on the list for 2010. It used to be relatively common, especially along field edges but recently the only site where it regularly occurs is between Ladybank and Dunshelt (George Ballantyne) at field corners and along some edges.

Much driving around the highways and byways of Fife did not find any more. However, on one of my many trips from St. Andrews to Dundee I saw a few plants at the edge of a bit of "set aside" field area. This was a new site and was dutifully recorded.

A week later, the field of Parsnips nearby had *G. segetum* not only all along the edges but throughout the whole field! An estimate was made of about 2,500 plants.

Two points of interest:

The adjacent field was in carrots the previous year and had been left uncultivated. There was a wonderful collection of arable weeds but no marigolds. They only occurred in this year's parsnip field.

My questions are: for how long do the seeds of *G. segetum* remain viable and what stimulated their germination?

### **On the edge in West Sutherland (VC 108)**

Pat and Ian Evans

Since West Sutherland occupies the 'top left hand corner' of mainland Britain, it is no surprise that a number of species appear to reach their geographical limits here. This year we have found Common Toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*) and Reflexed Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia distans* ssp. *borealis*) at their apparent western limits on the north coast, a new northern site for Brown Sedge (*Carex disticha*), and the first record since 1970 for Pale Persicaria (*Persicaria lapathifolia*). New sites 'on the edge', in other senses, include several for the coastal Slender Spike-rush (*Eleocharis uniglumis*) and an albino form of Trailing Azalea (*Loiseleuria procumbens*) right on the v-c boundary with East Sutherland.

### ***Meum athamanticum* (Spiguel) in Cumbria**

Geoffrey Halliday

Apart from a single site in South Northumberland, *Meum* is restricted in England to south Cumbria, where it occurs almost exclusively in the south-east in Westmorland (VC 69) and North-west Yorkshire (VC 65). This nationally Scarce Species was recorded in *A Flora of Cumbria* (1997) from 22 tetrads. During the recent Threatened Plant Project survey visits were made to 17 of these. It was re-found in 13 but discovered in two new tetrads. The picture generally is a



fairly healthy one, all the apparent extinctions resulting from grazing. Most sites were on laneside banks and verges on mildly acid brown-earth soils. Associated species were generally few.

### A Cumbrian Rare Plant Register

Geoffrey Halliday

This exhibit featured a draft page of an electronic Rare Plants Register of Cumbria's native vascular plants. Sites for about 290 Nationally Rare, Nationally Scarce or Threatened Species were given together with about 50 additional species occurring in 20 or fewer tetrads.

### How useful are axiophytes?

Angus Hannah

A list of axiophytes for VC 100 was compiled using BSBI guidelines, but allowing flexibility to include 'good' species present in up to 50% of monads. (Still leaving out Heath Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata*) Marsh Hawk's-beard (*Crepis paludosa*), Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) Ragged-Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) - there's just too much good habitat!)

A set of 32k monad species-records for Bute was mapped showing:

1. total species-count per monad
2. axiophyte-count per monad
3. axiophytes as percentage of species in square

There was general similarity but subtle differences between the three maps.

- 1 picked out squares with varied habitats, regardless of quality
- 2 showed where habitat is both varied and good
- 3 focused on quality only, and avoided underrating less species-rich (e.g. acid bog) areas and fragmentary coastal squares.

Species lists from 430 small plots on Bute were also analysed. Almost half had one or no axiophytes, but 10% had between 8 and 11; these represented a wide range of good habitats, including fens, flushes, outcrops, saltmarsh and dunes. One exceptional sample had 20 axiophytes in a 4m square.

It was concluded that axiophytes can be useful in highlighting important botanical sites and adding some objectivity to our opinions.

### Finds in VC 87 (West Perth) in 2010

Jane Jones, Paul Stanley, Liz Lavery

Our display of photographs and pressed specimens illustrated some of the most unusual finds made in West Perth in 2010. Angel's trumpets (*Datura ferox*), Low Valleyfield, identified by Angus Hannah; Shaggy Soldier (*Galinsoga quadriradiata*), Auchterarder (VC 88) by Bertie Robinson; Late Michaelmas-daisy (*Aster x versicolor* = *A. laevis* x *Aster novi-belgii*), Loch Achray by Jane Jones, Marsh Stitchwort (*Stellaria palustris*), found at several sites in Loch Lub-

naig Marshes, BSBI Field Meeting; Purple Small-reed (*Calamagrostis canescens*), by Liz Lavery at Inverlochlarig Car Park, identified by Alistair Godfrey; Purple Fumitory (*Fumaria purpurea*) by Paul Stanley and Liz on a new round-about, A823 at A9 Junction, a fantastic first for VC 87, sadly mown 3 days later; Musk Thistle (*Carduus nutans*), first record since 1930, Northern Knotgrass (*Polygonum boreale*), and Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), nearby beside the A823. Paul Stanley displayed specimens of three vice-county new records - Tall Tutsan (*Hypericum inodorum*), Meadow x Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus x brachystylus* = *A. pratensis* x *A. geniculatus*), Giant Fescue x Tall Fescue (*Festuca gigantea* x *F. arundinacea* = *F. x fleisheri*), and a remarkable first for Scotland, Perennial Centaury (*Centaureum scilloides*), from the lawn at Shambellie House Museum, Dumfriesshire. Sarah Longrigg provided beautiful photographs of Bog Orchid (*Hammarbya paludosa*) from Inverlochlarig and near Inverarnan, and 3 Bladderwort species (*Utricularia*): *U. stygia*, *U. minor* and *U. vulgaris* agg from Loch Lubnaig Marshes.

### Alpine Woodsia (*Woodsia alpina*) in Angus – Back from the Brink?

Theo Loizou

Evidence suggested that the healthy colony of *W. alpina* in Corrie Fee, described by Lynne Farrell in the 1980's as comprising up to 13 clumps, was decreasing. In 2007, one "dead" plant had been noted by H McHaffie and R Marriott (at the south site) and in another location where *W. alpina* was known (the north site), no plants were detected. Having searched widely for this fern in 2008, I failed to find any plants. Ken Slater who had known the *Woodsia* colonies for many years reported that they were faring badly.

However, in 2009, I unexpectedly found one plant with two fronds (north site) and later in the same year H McHaffie and R Marriott discovered several more crowns at both north and south sites. Some of these were in exactly the same locations as seen in older photographs.

In this report evidence was presented which shows that this species has recovered in Corrie Fee. The fluctuations in numbers of visible crowns / fronds of *W. alpina* in Corrie Fee may reflect just a response to changing weather patterns rather than a change in actual numbers of plants.

### Hieracium maps

David McCosh and Tim Rich

A BSBI book of hawkweed (*Hieracium*) maps is in production and information about it was exhibited.

## New interesting Lothian plants

Douglas McKean

Mainly various new escapes from the Lothians collected by D McKean, Barbara Sumner, Jackie Muscott & Mary Clarkson were exhibited: Purple Small-reed x Narrow Small-reed (*Calamagrostis x gracilescens*) - a new vice-county record, Palm Sedge (*Carex muskingumensis*, cult.), Stearn's Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster stearnianus*), Connolly's Knotweed (*Fallopia x bohemic*), Bloody Crane's-bill (*Geranium sanguineum* var. *striatum*), Large-leaved Avens (*Geum macrophyllum*) & hybrid, Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolour*), *Paeonia mascula*, Maltese-Cross (*Silene [Lychnis] chalconica*) and Arrow Bamboo (*Pseudosasa japonica*).

## Plant pearls and perils in VC 77 in 2010

Peter Macpherson

The specimens on display were collected in 2010 and proved to be new records for Lanarkshire. During the year one Peril was encountered!

Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) from the wood at Auchenshuggle- in the shadow of the M74 extension. Distribution given as native up to central Scotland.

Goat's-rue (*Galega officinalis*) from a hollow at Bogleshole, Rutherglen. Distribution given as tips and waste places in south and central Britain. Two previous Scottish records.

Red Jasmine (*Jasminum beesianum*) from the wood at Auchenshuggle. Distribution given as not commonly grown, sometimes self-sown in southern England. No previous Scottish record.

Beauty-bush (*Kolkwitzia amabilis*) from a wood at Robroyston. Distribution given as occasionally produces seedlings or persists as an isolated bush. No previous Scottish record.

Columbine (*Aquilegia vulgaris*) 'Nora Barlow' from a lane side at Uddingston. Distribution not given. Possibly first "in the wild".

I am indebted to Douglas McKean who determined most of the above records.

The only Peril was self inflicted! In order to obtain a specimen from part way down a very steep bank, I tied one end of a rope to a tree, put the other end round my waist and slowly lowered myself down (mobile phone in pocket).

## *Calamagrostis scotica* or *stricta*?

Clare Rickerby

There is some confusion over the taxonomy of Scottish Small-reed (*C. scotica*) with DNA tests not conclusively separating it from Narrow Small-reed (*C. stricta*). Ten characters were measured on the RBGE herbarium specimens of 111 *C. stricta* plants and 22 *C. scotica* plants to see whether there was any morphological (physical) difference between them. A principal component analysis (PCA) showed some clustering of *C. scotica* and *C. stricta* samples but did not

separate the two species unequivocally. In fact owing to high levels of variation within *C. stricta* it is possible that *C. scotica* plants represent the extreme end of this variation in *C. stricta*.

## Northern Deergrass: habitats from calcareous flush to blanket bog

Jeremy Roberts

Northern Deergrass (*Trichophorum cespitosum* sensu stricto) occurs in the distinctive habitat of calcareous flushes, for instance in Teesdale and in Perthshire, associated with relict species such as Alpine Bartsia (*Bartsia alpina*) and Brown Bog-rush (*Schoenus ferrugineus*). By way of contrast, in summer 2010 it was found in great abundance on Butterburn Flow by the river Irthing on the Cumbria/Northumberland border in relatively undisturbed blanket bog.

Most plants were along, or at least near, seepage areas on the bog, with the more stagnant or drier areas being dominated by the sterile hybrid deergrass *T. x foersteri*.

Specimens, photos of the plants in varying habitats and comparative lists of associates from various habitats were displayed. Differences in the nuts between the two species, *T. cespitosum* and *T. germanicum* (the familiar deergrass) and other identification hints were also illustrated.

## Brown New Zealand Sedges

Alison Rutherford

The light brown/copper/bronze or reddish-brown New Zealand sedges are widely cultivated and are increasingly seen outside gardens. Their names are possibly confused by growers.

To make matters more difficult, many species can be green or bronzy-brown and selections have been made of different colour forms. *Carex comans*, for instance, has 12 cultivars listed in the current 'RHS Plant Finder'. I do not know whether the exhibited plants are true-to-name!

## Evaluating the usefulness of comparative estimates of nuclear DNA content for Orchid taxonomy

Leslie Tucker & Ben Zonneveld

The results presented arose from an ongoing collaboration between an amateur botanist (LT) with a keen eye for finding unusual hybrids, who selected and mailed appropriate plant samples from Scotland, and a professional geneticist (BZ), who has expertise and laboratory facilities in the Netherlands for estimating the weight of whole chromosomal DNA content by flow cytometry.

This past summer more than 50 orchid plants were examined. Despite a few determinative difficulties and admittedly speculative rationalisations, some clear successes resulted.

C-values of Marsh Fragrant-orchid (*Gymnadenia densiflora*) (13.6 pg) and Heath Fragrant-orchid (*G. borealis*) (15.2) appear to be consistent at widely separated locations. At the largest site, where populations intermixed, even smaller flowers which appeared morphologically closer to *G. borealis*, nevertheless analysed as *G. densiflora* when they grew in the calcareous flushes and flowered later; only two plants among hundreds were found to have intermediate c-values (14.2, 14.5) indicating hybridity.

Investigating apparent hybrids between *Gymnadenia* and *Dactylorhiza* also revealed a few with appropriately intermediate c-values. Others, while appearing and smelling of *Gymnadenia*, analysed resolutely in the *Dactylorhiza* region – maybe repeated back-crosses to the usually odourless parents becomes undetectable by c-value, but not by nose.

Undoubtedly this technology shows considerable potential, but providing good plant samples has some pitfalls.

**Heather McHaffie** had leaflets with courses at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and at Kindrogan Field Centre. There were also posters and specimens of ferns and information about the British Pteridological Society with a recently produced leaflet on where to see ferns.

### Identification Help

Douglas McKean

A table was provided for the display of unidentified specimens and/or photographs. It was well used and many identifications were made.

**BSBI, BSS, Plantlife, NTS and SNH** all variously displayed publications, reports, posters and membership details.

### Scottish Field Meetings 2011

Full details of the following meetings will be found in the Year Book

June 11	Castle Semple Loch, Renfrewshire	K Watson
June 19*	Guardbridge, Fife	J McIntosh & S Edwards
June 25	Alpine Field Meeting, Perthshire	J Holland
June 26*	Birks O'Aberfeldy, Mid Perths	J McIntosh
July 9-11	NW Isle of Skye	S Bungard
July 23-24	Beinn A'Creachain & Stob Ghobhar, Argyll	G Rothero
July 30*	Dolphinton Grasslands SSSI Peebles	J McIntosh
July 31	Two West Lothian Bings	J Muscott
Aug 6-7*	Alchemilla Workshop, Ullapool	M Bradshaw
Aug 13*	Kittyfield Farm, Melrose, Dumfries	J McIntosh & H McHaffie

(\*Bookings to Mrs Jane Jones, Cuilvona Cottage, Aberfoyle, Stirlingshire, FK8 3TQ)

### The Cairngorms Rare Plants Project

ANDY SCOBIE

The Cairngorms Rare Plants Project was launched in March 2010 to deliver targeted conservation action for four of Scotland's rare plant species at sites within the Cairngorms National Park. The four lucky plants receiving this special attention are: Twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*), Intermediate Wintergreen (*Pyrola media*), Small Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum sylvaticum*), and Lesser Butterfly-orchid (*Platanthera bifolia*) - see photographs on page 40. All four have undergone significant declines in the UK and have been identified as conservation priorities in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Scotland's Species Action Framework. Funding for this three year project has been contributed by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Scottish Natural Heritage via the Species Action Framework, and the Cairngorms National Park Authority, with additional in-kind support from

the University of Aberdeen.

The project aims to: (i) establish the full distribution and current status of the four target species in the Cairngorms National Park, (ii) raise awareness of the conservation issues that they face, and (iii) identify and implement positive management action on the ground.

Work during the first year has focussed on establishing links with partner organisations, land managers, plant conservation experts and local recorders. Surveys have been undertaken at key sites in the Park in order to gather baseline information on the health and status of the plants in relation to habitat conditions and site management. Utilising information from these surveys and other studies, working closely with land managers and experts, site specific management plans are now being developed containing actions to promote the recovery and spread of the target species. Favourable management will be secured at sites which currently support viable populations of these plants and hands-on targeted action implemented at sites where populations are in need of recovery.

With help from the BSBI vice-county recorders, local wildlife recorders and the BSBI's 'Big Distribution Database', all records for the target species in the Park area have been collated and sorted, a database created and distribution maps produced. This valuable new resource has enabled the identification of key sites for the target species in the Park and provided a basis from which to inform land managers of the locations of rare plant sites on their land. Over the course of the three year project, all recent and historical records in the database will be visited and, where populations are re-found, basic monitoring and accurate GPS location data will be collected. Searches will also be conducted for these plants in areas of suitable habitat. To achieve this, increased recording and monitoring of these species is being encouraged by working with local rangers and volunteers whose assistance with these tasks has already proved invaluable.

Look out for the Cairngorms Rare Plants Project website, which will soon be launched, where you can read more about the project and the species being targeted. In the meantime, to find out more or to get involved, please contact Andy Scobie (Project Officer). E-mail: [a.scobie@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:a.scobie@abdn.ac.uk) or Tel: 01479 810477. Address: Scottish Natural Heritage, Achantoul, Aviemore, Inverness-shire, PH22 1QD.

Thanks for the support and enthusiasm of all those who have helped with the project so far.

*Pyrola rotundifolia* LW GASKELL & RWM CORNER  
(Round-leaved Wintergreen); a new and unusual Borders site

On September 18<sup>th</sup> 2009, LWG made the exciting discovery of *Pyrola rotundifolia* at the Braeheads, St Boswells, Roxburghshire (VC 80) in an entirely new habitat for the Scottish Borders.

This north facing site at an altitude of 90m was on a steep slumped north facing bank of boulder clay perched above a cliff of Old Red Sandstone with the River Tweed flowing strongly at its base. The colony consisted of 20 fruiting heads with their long curved styles scattered over 6 x 3 metres and growing through a carpet of the moss *Rhytidiadelphus triquetrus* under *Salix caprea* (Goat willow) with *Fragaria vesca* (Wild Strawberry) as a close associate. All previously known sites for the *Pyrola* in VC 80 are in base-rich mires, the nearest of which is in the Whitlaw Mosses National Nature Reserve lying 8.3 km to the west. It seems likely that this site has been the source of the Braeheads colony as the dust-like seed can be carried by the wind for long distances.

The Braeheads site is north facing and on poorly drained basic boulder clay, factors which have provided a suitable habitat requirement for the *Pyrola*. Colonisation of new sites in the British Isles is documented elsewhere. For example in 2002, 1000 plants of the *Pyrola* were recorded by SM Maxwell from a heathy birch wood on a reclaimed coal bing at Gore Bridge Midlothian, the first record in VC 83 since 1863 (see *Watsonia* 25, 2005:431) and it was recorded from a hazel-birch-ash wood on waste from a limestone quarry near Wrexham in 1989 (see *Watsonia* 23, 2001: 563). It also appeared in a limestone quarry for a few years in Yorkshire before dying out (pers. com. FJ Roberts.) The unstable nature of the Braeheads habitat and competition from young *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash) and *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech) noted nearby are factors which are likely to affect the future of the *Pyrola* at the Braeheads site.

Post script by RWMC.

This site was difficult to reach, requiring a considerable amount of agility on account of the steepness of the earthy slope, the vertical drop below and a seemingly impenetrable thicket of *Prunus spinosa* (Sloe). The *Pyrola* would have remained undetected here but for the exploratory instincts of LWG.

VC 84 is one of the smallest vice-counties in Britain, but it's very 'bitty' with scarcely any 1x1 square covered by a single habitat. So there is really no option but to survey every monad (some 300 odd). Between 1987 and 2000, I did indeed visit every square, and in addition had some useful records from Stewart Maxwell and Clive Dixon who were leading SWT survey teams.

However visiting a square is not the same as surveying it. Some of the 'hot spots' were well-covered, but other areas perhaps got a flying visit (and I don't much enjoy surveying built-up areas, though they can sometimes be interesting). So with the Atlas behind me I decided to start again, and so far have turned up over 400 new post-1987 records in the various hectads.

Some of these records are introductions, including public plantings of trees and shrubs, particularly in Livingston New Town (though by no means confined to that area), and I've certainly not identified them all, particularly the Cotoneasters. However there are also exciting finds, sometimes of plants believed extinct, others previously unrecorded.

Leaving aside the trees and shrubs, a number of garden plants are quite well-established – Lupins (*Lupinus x regalis*), Montbretia (*Crocasmia x crocosmiflora*), Dotted Loosetrife (*Lysimachia punctata*) and of course Daffodils (*Narcissus* spp) to name a few. More recent discoveries of garden escapes include Stinking Hellebore (*Helleborus foetidus*), under trees by a stream, Red-hot Poker (*Kniphofia uvaria*) in a Livingston hedgerow, and Lesser Meadow-rue (*Thalictrum minus*) by a road some distance from the sea. Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*) turned up on a roadside verge, Maltese-Cross (*Silene* [*Lychnis*] *chalcedonica*) by a track, Evening Primrose (*Oenothera*) in a waste patch and a striped form of Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*) 'Variegata' in a Livingston wood. It was fortunate the latter was in flower, otherwise I might have recorded it as *Phalaris arundinacea* var. *picta* or Gardeners' Garters which turns up from time to time. Since there seem to be a number of cultivated grasses with striped leaves, I shall need to examine them more closely in future.

It's been interesting to see the spread of salt-tolerant plants along roadsides in recent years. Danish Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia danica*), Lesser Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia marina*) and Reflexed Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia distans*) have become increasingly common, in that order, and now I feel quite disappointed if I don't find them along a decent stretch of road. Some years ago I recorded a couple of plants of Grass-leaved Orache (*Atriplex littoralis*) (now gone), but

Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*) is becoming more common, and this year a small patch of Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardii*) turned up on a roadside.

By contrast Corn Marigold (*Glebionis* [*Chrysanthemum*] *segetum*) is in retreat. I tried to re-find previous records in 2010 for the Threatened Plant Survey, and was not particularly surprised to be unsuccessful. In VC 84 (where it's not regularly planted by the local authority) it's a casual, here today and gone tomorrow.

Slender Rush (*Juncus tenuis*) turned up a couple of times recently on verges, as did Orpine (*Sedum telephium*) and a single plant of Pale Persicaria (*Persicaria lapathifolia*), and I found two new sites for Hedge Bedstraw (*Galium [album] mollugo*) in rough grassland (though one site near Bathgate appears to have been lost). Since Heather McHaffie started publicising it, I've found Purple Ramping-fumitory (*Fumaria purpurea*) several times, the last time growing obligingly close to Common Ramping-fumitory (*Fumaria muralis*) by way of comparison. A completely new plant was a nice patch of Great Brome (*Anisantha diantha*) in the corner of an arable field.

Wood Small-reed (*Calamagrostis epigejus*) used to be confined to a couple of ditches near Bo'ness, but has now advanced wonderfully, and can be found all over the town. Recently it also turned up in a rough field in Livingston (which will doubtless soon be built on). George Ballantyne told me some time ago that it was spreading in Fife.

But much more exciting was the discovery this year (2010) of a colony of *Calamagrostis x gracilescens* by a track to an old mine. It was growing on a verge which sloped down to a marshy area, and was identified by Douglas McKean who reckons it's more widespread than suggested in 'Stace'. Nearby was a large colony of Broad-leaved Helleborines (*Epipactis helleborine*), some 70 odd flowering spikes. But this was eclipsed by a colony of over 100 on a verge in a Livingston industrial estate (new to the hectad too). Was it a particularly good year for Helleborines, I wonder?

The *Calamagrostis x gracilescens* was one of the highlights of the year, the other being the discovery of Lesser Water-plantain (*Baldellia ranunculoides*) in a pond near Bathgate. The pond occurs in an area marked as woodland on the map: in fact at least 50% of the area is marsh, with a number of ponds. Presumably a failed attempt at afforestation.

There was one unwelcome introduction however: a few plants of Pirri-pirri Bur (*Acaena novae-zelandiae*) on a steep rocky slope at the base of Cairnpapple Hill. There were rabbit burrows nearby – just right to encourage the spread of this

invasive plant. I sometimes feel I should take a spade and some secateurs when I go botanising.

***Polygonum oxyspermum* ssp. *oxyspermum***  
**(‘Baltic’ Knotgrass)**

GH BALLANTYNE

In 1966, on part of our local beach in Kirkcaldy called Pathhead Sands I came across a large colony (630 plants) of a knotgrass growing in a sandy area that had been subject to recent disturbance owing to dumping and tidying up. Unable to name it, I took some to RBGE and to the then person i/c the herbarium, the late Win Muirhead. In turn, she parcelled them off to the University of Oslo, where Professor Nordhagen’s verdict was *P. oxyspermum*, ssp. *oxyspermum*. I am uncertain as to how much publicity this discovery received at the time; unfortunately although Miss Muirhead was, co-incidentally, VCR for Fife at the time, she did not publish the record. It did appear, however, in my *The Flowering Plants of Kirkcaldy and District* published in 1970, which however, because it was essentially privately published, did not have a wide circulation.

Next, on 19 June 2010 Bill Hay and Mary Benstead found a good colony of what they keyed out as *P. oxyspermum* ssp. *raii* growing on the North Sea coast at Kinshaldy, Tentsmuir near the mouth of the local burn, which has been subjected to much change in recent years owing to inundation by high tides and storms so that it is altering from sand dunes to saltmarsh. Further plants were gathered by W Hay in September 2010 following more recent inundation, which were considered by me to be similar to my earlier Pathhead shore plants, i.e. ssp. *oxyspermum*. Because Arthur Chater had re-described *P. raii* for the *Flora Europaea* in 1964, I sent him a couple of specimens which he duly said fitted ssp. *oxyspermum*, a fact later confirmed by PD Sell.

There seems to have been a certain reluctance by botanists in Britain to accept ssp. *oxyspermum* as British. In his “Review of the taxonomy of *Polygonum aviculare* and its allies in Britain” BT Styles (1962) listed *P. raii* and *P. oxyspermum* separately but considered that “the status of [the latter] as a full species is doubtful” and continued “I think [they] may be better treated as geographical subspecies of one species”. He also stated that “several specimens in Herb. Mus. Brit. have been labelled by Samuelsson as *P. oxyspermum* although the original collectors identified them as *P. raii*”; all from the east coast of Scotland, none were from Fife; however, he felt “uncertain about their correct determination”.

Perhaps thereafter British botanists were influenced by Nordhagen’s view that it was “casual, perhaps having arrived naturally from the Baltic” as stated by Stace (1997 repeated 2010); earlier, in 1990, Stace had included *P. oxyspermum*, opining that “our plant is ssp. *raii*”. The *BSBI Handbook of Docks and Knotweeds of the BI* (Lousley & Kent, 1981) did not as much as mention *P. oxyspermum* far less discuss it. However, by the 1980s Alan Silverside appeared to have accepted it as occurring in East Lothian, observing that ssp. *oxyspermum* was “very rare and sporadic along the coast [there] ... usually regarded as ssp. *raii* (= *P. raii*), East Lothian specimens, like others from east Scotland ... closely resemble ssp. *oxyspermum* of eastern Scandinavia” (Silverside & Jackson, 1988). This view is endorsed by Clement & Foster (1994) who state “Various records of native subsp. *raii* from the east coast of Scotland are perhaps referable to this subspecies [*oxyspermum*], suggesting that it might be an overlooked native plant”. I am inclined to agree and would urge others who walk the shores of east Scotland to keep an eye open for Baltic Knotgrass, to coin a common name.

A version of the above account together with a Tentsmuir specimen were put on display at the Scottish Annual Meeting in Edinburgh on 6th November and caught, in particular, the eye of Alan Silverside of the University of West of Scotland, who subsequently wrote to say he’d continued to work on East Lothian plants since 1982 along with one of his hon. students. He continued “So, in brief, we are conducting a biometric/statistical analysis of the available material [that will be submitted to the *New Journal of Botany*]” and that they would like to borrow a Tentsmuir specimen and visit the site during the summer of 2011 (pers. comm, 01/12//10).

The final unexpected development was the appearance in the January 2011 issue of *BSBI News* of amendments to the *Red Data List* for Great Britain which announced under *P. oxyspermum* that “there are a number of old records of ssp. *oxyspermum* from eastern Scotland, and it is now thought likely that it may have been a ‘natural colonist’, seed being transported by sea from native populations in the Baltic (Stace, 2010). Previously not listed it is added to the Waiting List until old records can be examined and its current status clarified” (Leach & Walker 2011).

It has been a long wait since 1966 ...!

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## A Kintyre Herbarium

I TEESDALE

Those of us with an interest in the flora of VC 101 (Kintyre) have reason to be grateful to MH Cunningham and AG Kenneth, joint authors of the rigorously academic and authoritative book *The Flora of Kintyre*, published in 1979. Most of the distributional data in it is based, as the introduction makes clear, on field-work carried out by the two authors; but they also made use of botanical records attributable to earlier authors.

One such was Latimer MacInnes, to whom the introduction refers as follows: 'The extensive Herbarium of L. MacInnes is preserved in the Museum at Campbeltown, and it has provided a number of records included in this checklist. Possibly some of the material may require reassessment; there are about 1000 sheets of which the majority are of no great interest. There are, however, 60 or more which are relevant to the present work. Material is in fairly good condition.' A dozen or so of the records in the Flora noted as being based on specimens in the Herbarium are also noted as the only records for the species concerned within the VC. Two examples of particular interest to me personally are of *Reseda luteola* (Weld), and *Fumaria officinalis* (Common Fumitory). Our local amateur botany group a few years ago found the Weld on what was then a small island near the mouth of Breakerie Water on the south shore of Kintyre Peninsula, where it is still present in small quantity. Glen Breakerie is the location given by MacInnes for his Herbarium specimen. As for the Fumitory, the photograph (figure 67) of this species in Rose Murphy's delightful new BSBI Handbook *Fumitories* was taken by Tim Rich in our back garden here in Campbeltown! Carlton Hill, the location given for the Herbarium specimen, is less than a mile from our house.

Tim Rich suggested that the existence and present whereabouts and condition of this Herbarium might merit a note in one of the BSBI's regular publications. The Herbarium was indeed in our museum, then housed in what is known as the Burnet building, until early this year (2010), although the building itself had four years earlier been largely adapted for office accommodation for Argyll and Bute Council, and the Public Library (till then housed in the building) moved to a new purpose-built amenity centre elsewhere in the town. The museum and its artefacts and other exhibits however remained in the Burnet building, together with the Herbarium, unsatisfactorily stored in several large cardboard boxes. Dr. Sharon Webb, Director and Curator of Kilmartin House Museum and recently-appointed Senior Curator of Campbeltown Museum, has been working on the Campbeltown collections, and last year at my request got out the Herbarium in its boxes, and we looked at some of the sheets. None of it had been subject to the proper acquisition procedures, nor had it been kept in appropriate conditions, and Dr. Webb had it on her agenda to rectify both these omissions.

Then, however, came the cold weather. Because the Burnet building is unheated at night, staff took the precaution of emptying the heating system and tanks of water to prevent burst pipes. But the un-displayed artefacts, including the Herbarium, were stored in a separate wing of the building which, unbeknown to the staff, contained a separate tank in the roof, still full of water. So the inevitable happened: one cold night the water froze, and when the thaw came the tank burst and water flooded down through the ceiling and into the store, inundating the Herbarium in the process. On hearing about this, Dr. Webb raced down to Campbeltown, rescued the herbarium and took it back with her to Kilmartin Museum. She says the individual sheets are less damaged than might be expected, and they are at present stored in a domestic freezer (which she had to buy for the purpose) while the Council tries to find the money to pay for a specialist conservator to work on the sheets. Meanwhile the herbarium is not of course available to be looked at by members of the public, a situation which in the present economic climate may persist for some time.

Latimer MacInnes, naturalist, essayist, linguist and poet, came from a fishing and seafaring family in Dalintober, at that time a separate community on the outskirts of Campbeltown. He was born in England but brought up in Campbeltown, where he lived until his death in 1948 at the age of 86. Angus Martin, Kintyre author and historian, to whom I am indebted for any information I have about MacInnes, writes about him at some length in his book *Kintyre: The Hidden Past* but mainly there about his study of the South Kintyre Scots dialect. Both authors of *The Flora of Kintyre*, Miss Cunningham and Archie Kenneth, died in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the former shortly after the Flora was published, and the latter in 1989.

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## Scottish Officer News

### Scottish Computerisation Project

The project aims to make Scottish BSBI paper records more widely available to conservationists, researchers and recorders via the BSBI, BRC's Vascular Plant DataBase and the NBN Gateway. Over the past year another 250,000 BSBI records have been digitised. This brings the total to 950,000 which is more than twice the original target of 450,000.

The main datasets digitised during the year include those which belonged to Olga Stewart for Kirkcudbrightshire, Bernard Thompson for Argyll and Mary McCallum Webster for Moray. Previously we collated full details of the records relating to *Plant Life of Edinburgh and the Lothians* (Smith, Dixon & Cochrane, 2002), and last year we did similar work on *The Changing Flora of Glasgow* (Dickson, Macpherson & Watson, 2000). Both are amongst the 520,000 records currently available on the NBN Gateway.

As I write the digitisation phase of the project is about to end. However that will leave considerable checking and correcting work before the remaining data can variously be handed back to recorders and uploaded to the NBN. As part of the project we have trialled the use of the NBN's Data Validation Tool to automatically check the data. This is an exciting new development. It tests the validity of dates and grid references, and checks whether grid references correspond to vice-counties. It can even check to see if a species has been recorded in a particular hectad before. All of which is extremely useful, and more importantly, helps us maintain our reputation as purveyors of fine records!

Thanks are due to SNH for their financial support and to all the contractors and recorders for their diligence and perseverance.

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## Beyond the Computerisation Project

As this major project nears completion, we have been thinking about how it can leave a lasting legacy in terms of helping recorders with data entry. A number of initiatives have been devised.

The project has funded the leading MapMate trainer in Britain, Martin Harvey, to make home visits to some 27 Scottish Recorders to provide one-to-one support and advice on the use of MapMate for recording, mapping and querying. Currently he is involved in an interesting follow-up project providing one-to-one support to four outlying recorders, using the telephone and the remote control of a computer over the internet - with the recorder's permission of course! This is useful for dealing with installation and set-up issues as well as for demonstration and teaching.

We have also asked Martin to prepare material to improve our on-line support for BSBI MapMate users. This will appear on the BSBI webpages in due course. And finally, I am in discussions with another contractor to comprehensively update and re-publish the existing BSBI MapMate handbook.

### Site Condition Monitoring

During the last year we surveyed and prepared Site Condition Monitoring (SCM) reports to SNH for Beinn a' Chuallaich, Easthaven, Kentra, Kyle of Sutherland, Raasay & Strathy Coast. Thanks to all the volunteers involved. The 2011 BSBI programme will include Ben Chonzie, Cairnwell, Keltneyburn and Rescobie & Balgavies. As it is the final year of the second cycle we are planning to do some mopping-up fieldwork, in sites such as Upper Solway, Sunart and possibly Ben Lui.

Also on the subject of SCM, we have just uploaded all 2000-2006 SCM records to the NBN Gateway. Further, SNH have just secured funds to collate all second cycle SCM records and make them similarly available. The work will allow a comparative analysis which will direct future SCM and rare plant conservation.

### SNH Grant

The Scottish Officer's current funding arrangements expire in October 2011. An application for a further three year grant was invited, prepared and submitted – all within a few weeks in November 2010. I'm delighted to report that SNH has agreed to continue to fund the initiative.



## The Threatened Plant Project

The BSBI Threatened Plant Project aims to investigate the distribution, ecology threats and management of selected UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Red Data List species. We have just finished digitising all TPP forms submitted to date, thanks to the SNH computerisation grant. Although the absolute number of 2010 TPP returns was slightly down from Scotland, in percentage terms we had an even greater response – with 36% of all TPP forms coming from north of the border. Let's try to maintain that excellent record in 2011!

We have recently written to Recorders with the full list of sites we would like recorded this year. But anyone can get involved as all the information is on the BSBI website and recorders might like to ask local members to help, perhaps after some training. Or conversely members might like to volunteer!

TPP 2011 Species		Number of Scottish VCs
<i>Pseudorchis albida</i>	Small-white Orchid	29
<i>Sedum villosum</i>	Hairy Stonecrop	23
<i>Baldellia ranunculoides</i>	Lesser Water-plantain	17
<i>Juncus compressus</i>	Round-fruited Rush	9
<i>Torilis arvensis</i>	Spreading Hedge-parsley	0
<i>Cuscuta epithymum</i>	Dodder	0
<i>Cicendia filiformis</i>	Yellow Centaury	0
<i>Galium pumilum</i>	Slender Bedstraw	0
<i>Neotinea (Orchis) ustulata</i>	Burnt Orchid	0
<i>Silene conica</i>	Sand Catchfly	0

Number of Scottish VCs for which 1970+ records exist for TPP species, from the VCCC.

As you can see there only four species with recent records in Scotland this year, so if you can spare the time, we would welcome any additional TPP forms. Note:

- It would be good if a concerted effort could be made to re-find populations of species with no (or few) recent records, even if *not* selected for survey.
- We were a little short of TPP forms for the two montane species *Polystichum lonchitis* (Holly Fern) and *Sibbaldia procumbens* (Sibbaldia) selected last year.

Please remember to make null returns. All the additional information gathered will help build a more complete picture of what has happened to the species.

## Scottish Vice-county Recorders

Since the last *Scottish Newsletter* there have been a number of Scottish Vice-county Recorder changes. We are pleased to announce the appointment of Sandy Edwards as joint recorder with George Ballantyne in Fife, Dr. Barbara Sumner as the new recorder in Midlothian, and Professor Mick Crawley as the new recorder in East Sutherland.

Barbara is well known in Edinburgh, the Lothians and BSS circles and is currently the BSS President. Although only formally appointed in autumn, Barbara has already had a very active first field season in 2010. Perhaps fewer in Scotland will know Professor Mick Crawley, the newly appointed Recorder in East Sutherland. Mick is the Recorder for Berkshire, and was looking for more of a highland challenge! The eagle-eyed amongst you will have spotted that he has wasted no time in publishing a draft flora for his new county. Even if largely based on existing records together with a first season's fieldwork it is a remarkable achievement.

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Barbara Ballinger, who had worked tirelessly as joint Recorder with Brian since their appointment in 2003. Please see the obituary in the recent *BSBI Yearbook*. I am pleased to report that Brian is happy to continue as Recorder in East Ross.

Finally you will have seen the vacancy adverts in January's *BSBI News* for Peebles, which has arisen as current recorder David McCosh has indicated he would like to stand down. We are also looking for joint recorders to help Edna Stewart in Stirling and Pat Evans in West Sutherland. We would very much like to thank all retiring Vice-county Recorders and warmly welcome the new appointees.

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer, c/o Royal Botanic Garden, Inverleith Row, Edinburgh, EH3 5LR; Tel: 0131 2482894 or 0791 7152580; [j.mcintosh@rbge.ac.uk](mailto:j.mcintosh@rbge.ac.uk)

### Courses at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Day or evening courses

**Recognising Plant Families**, (ILA\*) RBGE Staff. Wed: 27 April – 29 June 2011  
7.00 – 9.00pm. £80

**Moss Walks**, David Chamberlain and Liz Kungu. Wed: 4 - 25 May 2011 6.30 – 8.30 pm. £50

**Fern Identification**, Heather McHaffie, Sat: 11 June 10.00 am - 4.00pm. £45

**Scottish Enthobotany**, Greg Kenicer, Sat: 18 10.00 am - 4.00pm. £40

**Wildflower Identification**, Phil Lusby, Sat: 25 June 10.00 am - 4.00pm. £45

**Fossil Plants**, Greg Kenicer, Sun: 26 June 10.00 am - 4.00pm. £40

There is a wide range of courses throughout the year that also include horticulture, art and craft and herbal medicine. Full programme [www.rbge.org.uk/education](http://www.rbge.org.uk/education) Contact Education Department Tel: 0131 248 2937 or [education@rbge.org.uk](mailto:education@rbge.org.uk)

(ILA\*) These courses are eligible for support for people on lower incomes who have an Individual Learning Account [info@ilascotland.org.uk](mailto:info@ilascotland.org.uk)

**RBGE Certificate in Practical Field Botany** (ILA\*) Heather McHaffie

Eight modules: Plant identification, Preparation for field work, Information recording, Pressing and mounting, Habitat surveying, Applied Fieldwork 1, 2 & 3.

Option 1. Fri. – Mon. 3 – 6 June & 17 - 20 June 2011 at RBGE and sites in the Lothians. £450. This course has a discounted price of £325 for full-time students.

Option 2. Sat - Sat 16 - 23 July 2011. Residential course at Kindrogan Field Centre. Including all course materials field trips, assessment and one week's accommodation. £530.

## PLANTLIFE SCOTLAND EVENTS

### April 2011

**Wildflowers Count survey 2011** is launched. Sign up to participate at any time, through our website or by contacting the Plantlife Scotland office.

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1 – 4 pm**

**John Hope Gateway** at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

**Drop-in event.** First Steps: getting to know our wild flowers. How many common wild plants do you know? It may be more than you think! Find out more about the flowers that grow around where we live. Free admission.

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2 – 4 pm**

**Dean Castle Country Park**, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire.

**First Steps** walk. First Steps is an easy introduction to our common wild flowers. A gentle walk looking at some of the plants featured in the First Steps identification cards.

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May, 11 am – 4 pm**

**Muiravonside Country Park**, by Linlithgow.

**Training Day** for Plantlife's **Wildflowers Count survey**. Find out more about the sur-

vey methods and what to look for in the field. Suitable for all skill levels.

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May, 10 am – 4 pm**

**National Museum of Rural Life**, Wester Kittinghside, nr. East Kilbride.

**Learn how to identify wildflowers.** This event is for people who would like to find out how to use wildflower keys and build up their expertise on Scottish wildflowers. Led by Dr Heather McHaffie, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2 – 4 pm**

**Kinnoull Hill Woodland Park**, Perth.

**First Steps** walk. Details as for 15<sup>th</sup> May.

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> - Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June**

**Royal Highland Showground**, Ingleton, Edinburgh. **Gardening Scotland 2011** – come and see us again at the biggest gardening show in Scotland! We will be looking for volunteers to help on the stand – please get in touch if you can help. Show information at [www.gardeningscotland.com](http://www.gardeningscotland.com).

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June, 10 am – 4 pm**

**Merkinch LNR**, Inverness.

**Learn how to identify wildflowers.** Details as for 24<sup>th</sup> May.

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2 – 4 pm**

**Drumpellier Country Park**, Coatbridge, N. Lanarkshire.

**First Steps** walk. Details as for 15<sup>th</sup> May.

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June, 11 am – 4 pm**

**Glenniffer Braes Country Park**, Paisley, Renfrewshire.

**Training Day** for Plantlife's **Wildflowers Count survey**. Details as for 21<sup>st</sup> May.

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June, 10.30 am – 3.30 pm**

**Curr Wood and Upper Port Wood**, nr. Dulnain Bridge, Grantown-on-Spey.

**Guided walk.** Join Andy Scobie, from the Cairngorms Rare Plants Project, for this walk looking at the pinewood herbs of two special woodlands, including a chance to see the rare and beautiful twinflower, and species of wintergreen. Walk can be joined halfway if preferred – details of meeting points from Plantlife.

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July, 10.30 am – 1 pm**

**Lochore Meadows Country Park**, Crosshill, Fife.

**Ranger-guided walk.** Explore the varied countryside of this country park including woodlands, meadows, a nature reserve and ponds.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2 – 4 pm**

**Bonaly Country Park**, Pentland Hills, Edinburgh.

**First Steps** walk. Details as for 15<sup>th</sup> May.

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2 – 4 pm**

**Flanders Moss NNR**, Carse of Stirling.

**Guided walk with Plantlife and Buglife.** Explore the wild plants and invertebrates at this internationally important site, the largest remaining intact “raised bog” in Britain.

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> – Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> August**

Mansfield Showground, Muir of Ord, Ross-shire. **Black Isle Show** – come and see our stand at this busy show with agricultural competitions, flower show, craft and food halls and family attractions. We will be looking for volunteers to help on the stand – please get in touch if you can help. Show information at [www.blackisleshow.info](http://www.blackisleshow.info).

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1.30 - 4 pm**

**Ariundle NNR, Sunart Oakwoods**, nr. Strontian, Argyll.

**Ranger-guided walk** around these beautiful oakwoods, one of the few surviving remnants of the woodlands which were once widespread along the Atlantic coast of Scotland. Part of the International Year of Forests.

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September, 11 am – 1 pm**

**Birnam Woods**, Dunkeld, Perthshire.

**Fungi and Beatrix Potter. Guided fungi walk.** Join mycologist Professor Roy Watling for a fungi walk with a difference! Find out about the connection of Birnam Woods with famous childrens’ author Beatrix Potter, who collected and illustrated fungi here. Refreshments and Beatrix Potter exhibition at Birnam Institute. Part of the International Year of Forests.

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1 – 4 pm**

**John Hope Gateway** at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Drop-in event.

Details as for 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2 – 4 pm**

**Culbokie Wood**, nr Dingwall, Highland.

**Guided fungi walk.** Join us for a fungi walk at this Scots pine woodland in the Black Isle. Led by David Genney of Scottish Natural Heritage.

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October, 10.30 am – 1 pm**

**Lothian area.**

**Guided lichen walk.** Scotland is a 'hot-spot' of lichen diversity, and this walk will explore the world of epiphytic lichens (lichens growing on trees). Open your eyes to the hundreds of fabulous species that often go unnoticed to untrained eyes, despite bringing colour and life to this habitat throughout the year! Led by lichenologist Sally Eaton; details to be confirmed.

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 10 am – 12.30 pm**

**Comrie Woods Important Plant Area**, Comrie, Perthshire.

**Guided walk.** Enjoy the winter beauty of Comrie Woods and look at the lichens which

grow here. Led by lichenologist John Douglass.

#### **How to book**

For more details of events in Scotland, or to book a place, please email [scotland@plantlife.org.uk](mailto:scotland@plantlife.org.uk) or phone (01786) 478509. For First Steps and Wildflowers Count events, please contact Davie Black - [davie.black@plantlife.org.uk](mailto:davie.black@plantlife.org.uk) or (01786) 469778. Events are open to all. All walks and training days listed are free of charge, but donations to Plantlife welcome. Please leave a contact telephone number for us to use in the unlikely event of cancellation. If you have any special requirements, please mention these when booking. We ask that children under 16 are accompanied by an adult.

#### **What to bring**

- Outdoor clothing appropriate to the weather, with waterproof outers (top and bottom)
- Sturdy footwear – e.g. walking boots
- Sun hat, sun block (or high-factor cream) as required, and insect repellent
- Something to drink, and a packed lunch if required

### **British Pteridological Society Scottish Group Programme 2011**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Friday-Sunday 3-5 June	Gardening Scotland, Edinburgh. BPS Stand	Free entry for helpers. Contact Frank McGavigan
Saturday 2 July	Ben Lui	<i>Woodsia alpina</i> monitoring
Tuesday- Wednesday 6-7 September	Bridge of Orchy & Glencoe	<i>Athyrium distentifolium</i> monitoring
Saturday-Sunday 24-25 September	RBGE John Hope Gateway	Ferns & Fossils Event Helpers required – contact Frank McGavigan
Sunday 9 October	Adrian Dyer’s Garden	Annual Get-together – book sales, plant swap, planning for 2012

All BSBI members are welcome to any of these meetings. Please contact Frank McGavigan for further information: 12 Glenbank Avenue, Lenzie, Glasgow G66 5AA

[frank@mcgavigan2.demon.co.uk](mailto:frank@mcgavigan2.demon.co.uk)

0141 776 1019

**BSBI Field Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> May 2010**  
**Arthur's Seat – Report from a beginner!**

LAURA COVENTRY

We met at the Holyrood Park Education Centre on a warm sunny spring day. A short briefing from Jim McIntosh was followed by an introduction about Arthur's Seat, its notable plants and their management from the Ranger Service. One of the most amazing species is Adder's-tongue fern (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) which occurs in vast quantity – in possibly the biggest population anywhere in Scotland. The group of twenty or so was then divided up into three: complete beginners, beginners and improvers, and we set off.

The complete beginners group – my group - was small and led by Jim McIntosh. For me the first mystery was how to use Rose's *The Wildflower Key*, our recommended text. Starting from the very early pages of the book it was illuminating to see how keys worked. We learnt the importance of reading both - or all - options very carefully and being absolutely clear what the terminology means. And we also learnt the pitfalls of keying when a typographical mistake took us in completely the wrong direction - an error which soon became apparent. The keying principles were patiently imparted by Jim.

Arthur's Seat is an amazing interesting botanical site given its city-centre location. In the course of the day we saw Sticky Catchfly (*Silene [Lychnis] viscaria*), Forked Spleenwort (*Asplenium septentrionale*) and Spring Cinquefoil (*Potentilla tabernaemontani*) as well as the Adder's-tongue – and this only a small selection of the local specialities. Notebooks were filled with (mostly readable) notes although it also became apparent that sight was not the only sense used in identification – touch, smell and even taste were also regularly used. We felt for the bulbs of Bulbous Buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*), tasted Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and sniffed Hedge Woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*) – yuk!

We were introduced to a few early grasses, rushes and sedges and some simple tips on how to distinguish these was given. However few were at a readily-identifiable stage – given our long cold winter. But Jim did get quite excited by Brown Sedge (*Carex disticha*) and Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*) in Hunter's Bog. We regrouped for a sociable and scenic lunch - perched on a ridge facing Arthur's Seat itself, overlooking Edinburgh, and watching a pair of nesting ravens.

The major complaint about the day was the vast amount of information being freely offered and the lack of brainpower to store it all – a refresher day is definitely needed to go over the same route. I cannot recommend BSBI educational field meetings highly enough, as the willingness to impart information to a com-

plete beginner was phenomenal! Thank you Jim and fellow leaders, Richard Pankhurst and Jackie Muscott.

**Introduction to Sedges, Whitlaw Mosses NNR ANDREW TONGUE**  
**Roxburghshire (VC 80) 7 August 2010**

**Leaders:** Jim McIntosh, Mike Porter, Phil Lusby & Rod Corner

I'd like to say thanks to the Botanical Society of the British Isles and their high-energy Scottish Officer Jim McIntosh for a massively educational day at Whitlaw Moss National Nature Reserve, near Selkirk.

As a field ornithologist by trade, I'm happy to say that I don't usually struggle to put names to birds, but I'm pretty shaky when it comes to certain plant families. The event provided me with a real insight into one of the UK's hardest to identify groups of plants, the beautiful and enigmatic Sedges.

A helpful hint came at the start of the day. To help beginners put a large number of, ahem, green stringy plants into one of three basic categories, we were taught the rhyme: "Sedges have edges, rushes are round and grasses have nodes from the top to the ground."

For myself as a birder, the word "Sedge" has been in my vocabulary since the age of nine as slang for a widespread species of small migratory bird, the Sedge Warbler, so I did have to put myself into botanical mode from the word go. Well, the word Sedge, in fact.

Robin Payne, of Scottish Natural Heritage, gave us a very interesting introduction to the site. We discovered that Whitlaw lies on Silurian / Ordovician-era rock. Plate tectonics and subsequent erosion by glaciers during the ice-age resulted in the formation of a series of ridges and basins. The basins eventually vegetated and became peat-filled. Many specialist fen plant species can now be found here. Incredibly, it could be argued that this small site is - from a biodiversity perspective - actually more important than the Cairngorms National Park. After we arrived at the reserve, Jim, along with fellow experts, Robin, Phil Lusby, Rod Corner and Mike Porter, were on hand to lead four groups of differing abilities.

Jim gently led the beginners group and, with his encouragement, using keys, we were able to identify a dozen sedge species: *Carex caryophyllea* (Spring Sedge), *C. distichia* (Brown Sedge), *C. flacca* (Glaucous Sedge), *C. hostiana* (Tawny

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Sedge), *C. lasiocarpa* (Slender Sedge), *C. limosa* (Bog-sedge), *C. nigra* (Common Sedge), *C. panicea* (Carnation Sedge), *C. paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge), *C. pulicaris* (Flea Sedge) and *C. rostrata* (Bottle Sedge). Specimens of *C. diandra* (Lesser Tussock-sedge) were handed out for homework. The more experienced groups found several other sedge species.

We were also very lucky to see the Nationally Rare Holy-grass (*Hierochloa odorata*) and the Nationally Scarce Round-leaved Wintergreen (*Pyrola rotundifolia*).

I would definitely recommend attending a BSBI event to anyone. They are free to attend. Please check their website ([www.bsbi.org.uk](http://www.bsbi.org.uk)) to find out if there are any field meetings taking place in your part of the country. To go one better I would recommend that you consider joining the Society to support it in its work as the leading organisation for the identification of British and Irish plants. The day ended with me hearing a Sedge Warbler calling tetchily from a nearby willow tree. Perhaps it was a little jealous of my new-found interest in the 'other' type of Sedge!

### **BSBI Scottish Website Manager Vacancy**

The BSBI websites are the public face of the BSBI. It is important that they look professional and are regularly updated. The current Manager of the BSBI Scottish website, Jane Squirrell, has moved away from Scotland and has indicated that she would like to resign. The BSBI is therefore looking for a new volunteer Website Manager to maintain the BSBI's Scottish website.

The main task will be to seek regular content from a variety of sources and arrange and upload it to the website. The content will be provided variously by the Scottish Officer, the BSBI Publicity Officer (once in post), Scottish BSBI members and other Scottish botanists. Other tasks will include ensuring compatibility with all popular browsers, as well as general website administration such as maintaining links and contact addresses.

The ideal candidate for this important role will have previous experience working with websites and be familiar with content management. Specifically, the applicant will need to have their own web editing package - such as Front Page or Dreamweaver, etc, and be proficient with it. The post holder will report to the BSBI Scottish Officer who is based at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. However the job will largely involve home working. Generally the time commitment

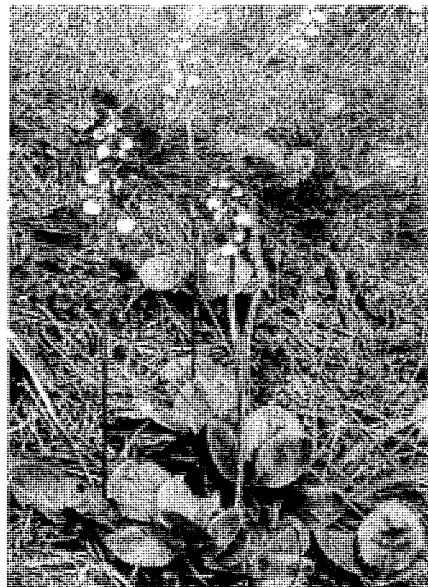
will be modest and flexible.

If you are interested in this vacancy, please contact me, Jim McIntosh, by e-mail to [j.mcintosh@rbge.ac.uk](mailto:j.mcintosh@rbge.ac.uk) or by post to BSBI Scottish Officer, RBGE, 20A Inverleith Row, Edinburgh EH3 5LR. See [www.bsbiscotland.org.uk](http://www.bsbiscotland.org.uk)

Crossword clue answer from editorial— Newsletter (New S Letter)



**Twinflower**



**Intermediate Wintergreen**



**Small Cow-wheat**



**Lesser Butterfly-orchid**