BSBI 2005
Scottish Newsletter No 27

Spotted Rock-rose

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BSBI SCOTTISH OFFICE

BSBI SCOTTISH NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

Sadly, only one name at the foot of the this Editorial. Most readers will be aware of the fact that my co-editor, Allan Stirling, died in December 2004. A personal reminiscence appears later in the Newsletter.

Local Change— a thank you to those who responded to the suggestion that articles relating to recording for the repeat of the 1987-88 BSBI Monitoring Scheme, would be welcome. It is gratifying that all material this year was submitted spontaneously.

We are grateful, once again, to Mrs JM Millar for providing the front cover illustration. Spotted Rock-rose was chosen to complement the article by Lynne Farrell on the discovery of Scotland's newest native plant. It was done partly from slides taken by the editor at the South Stack, Holyhead, Anglesey.

Those who attended the AGM of the BSBI membership in Scotland, or indeed anyone reading the draft minutes of that meeting, will be surprised not to see an article relating to the herbarium of Robert Brown, whose Scottish specimens are in the British Museum. When I received the rather lengthy article, I replied that I was minded to accept, but would ascertain the views of members at our forthcoming AGM. I also stated that, in view of the length, it would require to be compressed. When I wrote to intimate formal acceptance, I was informed that the authors had not wished to have their work 'shortened', and had submitted it elsewhere. I contacted them by return, stating that by compression, I meant just that, an expedient that had been used before: reducing the space between subsections and paragraphs and perhaps using a smaller font for specific aspects. The further reply stated that they had misunderstood and were sorry not to have the article in our Newsletter. I have learned from Douglas McKean that there is a microfiche set in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

Appreciation is due to JR Hawell for his meticulous proof reading.

Peter Macpherson
"Ben Alder"
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Chairman's Remarks, 2005

RICHARD PANKHURST

The BSBI Scottish committee has changed a good deal this year. First of all, Jackie Muscott had to resign because of ill health. Fortunately she has now made a good recovery. Three members were due to retire, Gordon Rothero, Phil Lusby and Ian Strachan. Our special thanks go to Gordon for the sterling work he has done for the committee by developing good relations with SNH.

We responded to the Scottish Executive on their consultation over Non Native Species, and took the opportunity to stress the vital role of the BSBI, not only for identifying and monitoring plants but also in education and public awareness.

The organisation of Site Condition Monitoring (SCM), which means reporting on rare species populations for SNH, could not begin until July. Our members responded very well and volunteers were found to survey nearly all the sites. Unfortunately the late summer weather was so very bad that some of the larger surveys have had to be postponed until this year.

Seven field meetings took place during the year, in Selkirk, Loch Katrine, Islay/ Jura, Golspie, Mid Perth, Kirkcudbright and Inverpolly. The accent was on surveys for Local Change, now completed, and with a good showing from Scotland. All they have to do now is to analyse the results! In October we were intrigued to learn that Plantlife is organising a Juniper survey for 2005, with special emphasis on Scottish populations. For the time being, BSBI members are encouraged to take part on an individual basis, and after that the BSBI might get more involved in 2006.

We greatly regret the passing of Allan Stirling, recorder for Ayrshire (VC 75), who will be hard to replace. Both Margaret Barron (Easterness & Nairns., 96) and Ro Scott (E. Ross, 106) stayed on to see out the Local Change survey, but have now definitively retired. Many thanks to both of them.

The long hoped-for Scottish Officer is now in post, and Jim McIntosh started work in November, and was warmly welcomed at the Annual Meeting. He is a previous member of the committee as well as being a recorder for VC 88. This is the beginning of a new era in Scottish botany, and we hope he will achieve great things. Jim himself explains what he expects to do in the article on page 12.

The Scottish Annual Meeting on 6th November was held at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. David McCosh gave us his talk on "Hawkweeds: the pleas-

ures of curiosity", so now there's no excuse for not collecting them and getting them named! The slide show was upgraded somewhat, as most of the pictures this time were on CD ROMs.

BSBI Committee for Scotland

The following is the composition of the Committee from November 2004 to November 2005

Chairman - Richard Pankhurst; Vice-Chairman - vacant; Secretary & Treasurer - Chris Miles; Field Meetings Secretary – Stephen Bungard; Minutes Secretary - Mark Watson; Exhibition Secretary – Alastair Godfrey. Members of Committee – Heather McHaffie, Jeanette Hall, Ian Green.
Representing SNH – Lynne Farrell.

At the AGM on 5 November 2005, Chris Miles, Mark Watson and Ian Green retire, the last named being 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 written consent of the candidate, who must also qualify as above, should reach the undernoted at Braeside, Boreland, Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire DG11 2LL by 30 September 2005.
C Miles – Hon Secretary

Scottish Field Meetings 2005

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

July 2-4	Orkney	Local Members
July 9–10	Aberdeenshire & Kincardinshire	IP Green
July 16-19	Sleat, SE Skye + Raasay	S Bungard
Aug 6-8	Wigtonshire	AJ Silverside
Aug 9-10	Kirkudbrightshire	D Hawker

Scottish Annual Meeting 2004

GORDON ROTHERO

Introduction

The Scottish Annual Meeting was held at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in conjunction with the Botanical Society of Scotland. The attendance list was signed by some 80 people but there are a few names missing of people I am sure I saw, so the attendance was probably nearer to 100. There were some 25 exhibits which completely filled the available space and provided a good window into the projects in which members of the Society are involved. It was good to see Summerfield Books back again after their absence last year. Tea and coffee were available as usual thanks to the hard work of Eileen and Bill Marshall.

The afternoon lecture was given by a well-kent face in the Society with David McCosh talking on "Hawkweeds: the pleasures of curiosity", illustrating both the attraction and diversity of this difficult group of plants. It was gratifying that so many members stayed for the evening meal and, after pleas to the caterers, 58 people sat down for a meal in the RBGE canteen. This had been transformed for the evening into an excellent dining room with what must be unique table decoration in the form of huge glass bowls with *Pistia stratiotes* (Water Lettuce). The thanks for this and for much of the local organisation must go to Douglas McKean assisted by Phil Lusby. For the first time the traditional post-prandial slide show also featured digital images as well as slides and this seemed to work well, avoiding some of the mechanical problems which have previously beset this event!

A report of the Scottish VC Recorders Meeting and draft Minutes of the AGM appear later in the Newsletter.

Abstracts of Exhibits

2004 in East Ross Barbara and Brian Ballinger

Carex recta (Estuarine Sedge) has long been known from the Kyle of Sutherland. Populations in two further 10km squares nearer the sea were described (seen by ourselves and Mary Dean). *Pilularia globulifera* (Pillwort) was found near or associated with *C. recta* in some sites. It was also discovered in a new location near Tarvie during the Local Change project. *Berula erecta* (Lesser Water-parsnip) grows in a fast flowing burn near Rhanich and was found in the course of a Local Change visit. It had not been seen in East Ross for more than 100 years. *Crassula tillaea* (Mossy Stonecrop) occurs on the gravel of two rail-

way station platforms in VC106 and another further north, these are its most northerly records. Garden escapes flowering early in the year included small monocotyledons such as *Chionodoxa forbesii* and *C. sardensis*, *Muscari armeniacum* and *Scilla siberica*.

Interesting incomers to Fife GH Ballantyne

Ten aliens were displayed, of which five are very well-established: Gillyflower (*Matthiola incana*), hitherto overlooked; White Melilot (*Melilotus albus*) and Wood Small-reed (*Calamagrostis epigejos*), both abundant on a few sites for about 20 years. A new casual is Thorn-apple (*Datura stramonium*) while Ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisifolia*) has not been seen since 1919; Sainfoin (*Onobrychis viciifolia*) and Many-seeded Goosefoot (*Chenopodium polyspermum*) are both second records, with Lucerne (*Medicago sativa*) an occasional incomer over the years.

Two encroaching brambles, new to Scotland GH Ballantyne

Rubus bartonii was found in 2004 to be abundant at the old railway station at St. Fillans (VC 88), probably having been introduced during WW2 in its commercial guise as 'Ashton Cross', and has increased steadily since the line closed in 1951. *Rubus phaeocarpus* was equally prolific by the former line south-west of Dumfries (VC 73) also in 2004, following other recent sightings in VC 83 and VC 85. Both brambles are capable of being very aggressive and may well be present elsewhere in Scotland.

Plants from and Selkirk & Roxburgh RWM Corner

Selkirkshire VC 79. New county records: *Amsinckia micrantha* (Common Fiddleneck), *Chenopodium rubrum* (Red Goosefoot), *Melilotus altissimus* (Tall Melilot), *Oenothera biennis* (Common Evening-primrose). All recorded by Luke Gaskell. *Myriophyllum spicatum* (Spiked Water-milfoil), RWM Corner. Second Scottish record for *Eleocharis austriaca* (Northern Spike-rush) from Paul Stanley and Brian Laney.

Roxburghshire VC 80. New county records: *Arenaria serpyllifolia* subsp. *leptoclados* (Slender Sandwort) RWM Corner; *Bolboschoenus maritimus* (Sea Club-rush) Nick Stewart; *Ranunculus omiophyllus* (Round-leaved Crowfoot) Jeff Waddell; *Bidens cernua* (Nodding Bur-marigold) first record since 1832; *Silene gallica* (Small-flowered Catchfly) first record since 1963, both Luke Gaskell.

The elusive Alpine Rush, *Juncus alpinoarticulatus* Clive Dixon

Juncus alpinoarticulatus is generally considered to be a rarity, and is a 'Scarce

Plant in Britain' (Stewart *et al* 1994). Fellow botanists who frequent the hills, and to whom I have spoken had no memory of having seen the plant. I have repeatedly come across it, e.g. in the Breadalbanes.

Reasons for under recording: It is not a plant which attracts a botanist's attention; it is in a 'difficult group'; it is sometimes mistaken for *J. articulatus*; most floras indicate that fruits are required for identification, but it is shy in fruiting.

New records from West Sutherland Pat and Ian Evans

The most exciting find was *Linnaea borealis* (Twinflower) in a remote native birchwood, a long way from its typical habitat in eastern pinewoods. Its discoverers Chris Ferreira and Alex Scott also recorded *Carex laevigata* (Smooth-stalked Sedge) and *Festuca gigantea* (Giant Fescue) in a wooded gorge near Unapool, both rare in the north-west. When we were visiting the gorge later in the year, Gordon Rothero spotted a small tree of *Sorbus rupicola* (Rock Whitebeam) for which this is a new locality. Alan Newton's expertise gave us *Rubus tuberculatus* near Scourie, a substantial extension of its Scottish range. One plant of *Centaurium erythraea* (Common Centaury) turned up in a disused quarry in Assynt; it is new to the vice county but there is a thriving roadside colony at Ullapool (VC105), which is not far away. On a visit to a tiny island in Loch Assynt we found it to be dominated by the medieval medicinal herb *Peucedanum ostruthium* (Masterwort).

The BSBI field trip to the Picos de Europa, 2004 Lynne Farrell

Fourteen members and two leaders visited this floriferous area of northern Spain from 31st May to 9th of June 2004. The exhibit showed the variety of habitats and species, and the range of colour and form to be found in locations around the two centres of Espinama and Pasada de Valdeon. A copy of the meeting report and a full list of plants and animals recorded in the Picos was also available for further reference.

Windbreak shrubs *et al* from the Isles of Scilly Geoffrey Halliday

Material was exhibited of the three commonest exotic windbreak shrubs: the ubiquitous *Olearia traversii* (Chatham Island), *Pittosporum crassifolium* (New Zealand) and, a more recent planting, *Coprosma repens* (Rutaceae, New Zealand). Other alien species shown were the handsome composites *Chrysocoma coma-aurea* and *Helichrysum petiolare*, the latter with a striking resemblance to *Otanthus maritimus*. Both are from South Africa and are locally established by sandy beaches. Another plant from the same habitat was *Senecio minimus*, a species not listed in Stace's Flora and said by Clement and Foster to be a wool alien.

Noteworthy recent finds in Cumbria Geoffrey Halliday & Jeremy Roberts
Specimens were shown of plants which now reach their northern limit in Cumbria:- *Myosurus minimus*, *Rubus caesius* x *R idaeus*, *Galium spurium* (with dimorphic fruits) and *Eleocharis palustris* ssp. *palustris*. The *Galium* record is the only post-1986 one north of Essex whilst the diploid *Eleocharis* subspecies had not previously been recorded north of Nottinghamshire, and there not post-1970. Three bird-seed aliens were also exhibited:- *Setaria verticillata, S. pumila* and *Amaranthus hybridus*.

Dyer's Greenwood on the M74 embankment JR Hawell and P Macpherson
The plant (*Genista tinctoria*) was first noted by JRH in July 2004 while travelling south on the M74. A number of small clumps were seen on the grassy embankment of the southbound carriageway from roughly midway between J 12 & 13, down to the J 13 exit (Lanarkshire VC 77). While travelling north, two patches were noted approximately three miles south of J 12. Later, JRH walked across moorland adjacent to the motorway until he reached the most extensive patch on the embankment. It was close to the boundary fence, thereby facilitating the attainment of an accurate GPS reading, photography and the collection of a specimen. Both authors travelled along the appropriate stretch later in the month and attempted to count the colonies. Four were detected on the southbound embankment and three on the north.
Question—a natural extension of its range, or a constituent of a seed-mix?

A new species of sedge related to *Carex recta* Boott for Britain Keith Hutcheon, Mary Dean and Paul Ashton
An interesting population of sedges was discovered on the Saltmarsh at Morvich at the head of Loch Duich in Lochalsh on the west coast of Scotland on 2nd July 2004. The population was present in creek channels but not in the main river channel, growing in the mid-marsh part of the saltmarsh zonation. This population represents a new species to Britain and is related to *Carex recta* Boott (Estuarine sedge). It is part of a group of taxa that are morphologically variable, reportedly of hybrid origin, and identification is difficult. The identity of the taxon is not yet confirmed. Opinion in Britain supports *C. salina* Wahl. as the closest morphologically and the opinion of a Canadian expert in this group is being sought. This is a very important discovery made by Keith Hutcheon while undertaking a survey of the Kintail Estate for the National Trust for Scotland.

Is the native British Bluebell threatened by Spanish and Hybrid Bluebells? D Kohn, P Hulme & P Hollingsworth
Hyacinthoides non-scripta is thought to be at risk from hybridisation and/or

competition with the introduced Spanish Bluebell, *H. hispanica,* or from established horticultural varieties. A 3-year study, funded by NERC through the Daphne Jackson Trust, seeks to evaluate the current status of natives and hybrids and the ecological consequences of hybridisation for the British Bluebell. Preliminary survey work in south-eastern Scotland showed 1) an increase in non-natives as a proportion of all bluebells with increasing urbanisation, and 2) non-natives occurring in all habitat types. Further survey in 2005 will expand on these findings.

A new site in Stirlingshire for *Drosera anglica* and *Drosera* x *obovata* Sarah Longrigg
In October 2003 I found a number of *Drosera* plants in VC 86 (Stirlingshire), on the southern slopes of Beinn Bhreac. They were clearly not *D. rotundifolia*, though this is the only species that has been recorded before in this 10k square, NS49. *D. anglica* and *D. intermedia* have been recorded within about 20km, though not in immediately adjacent squares and not recently. In Spring 2004 I returned to the site and also at intervals during the summer. *D. rotundifolia* was present as well as large numbers of plants with leaves of varying lengths. Longer leaves appeared as the season progressed. This was a cause for some confusion in identification. Many thanks to Alastair Culham who confirmed my identification of the original plants as *D.* x *obovata* and also identified some of the others as *D. anglica.*

Six Scottish species of *Fumaria* including the nationally scarce *F. purpurea* H McHaffie
A poster showed the six species of *Fumaria* regularly found in Scotland. Five of the species were still flowering and were on display. *Fumaria bastardii* was not exhibited as it had already died down. (It is distinguished by pale pink flowers with small, ragged-toothed sepals). *Fumaria officinalis* and *F. densiflora* both have smaller flowers than the other species, but *densiflora* has a compact flowering spike with large, rounded sepals at least half the length of the flower while *officinalis* has a long flower spike and sepals so small and narrow as to be barely visible without a hand lens. *F. muralis* and *F. officinalis* are the two species most frequently found. *F. muralis* has noticeably larger flowers, paler pink with conspicuous sepals only a little longer than broad. The two remaining species both have large, long sepals, more than half the length of the flower. *F. capreolata* and *F. purpurea* are superficially very similar. The differences are detailed elsewhere in the Newsletter, which also has an intimation of forthcoming workshops.

Conservation challenges of *Woodsia ilvensis* H McHaffie
A poster illustrated some of the work which has been done over the last ten years

to conserve the small endangered populations of *W. ilvensis*. Since one population was discovered in the 1950s it has declined from 25 plants to only two and no regeneration has been observed. Many locations that the Victorians visited and collected from no longer have any plants remaining. Some plants have been re-introduced to two Scottish sites using spores collected under licence from the few remaining plants in an adjacent valley. These plants have been monitored and have good survival rates, but no regeneration as yet. Plants of *Woodsia ilvensis* and *W. alpina* were on display with notes on their recognition. Any possible plants should be carefully recorded and photographed but should not be collected.

False Lupin (*Thermopsis montana*) Peter Macpherson

In the spring of 2004 Bryan Simpson noted foliage growing in the valley of a burn fairly close to the Lanarkshire/Ayrshire boundary. He took me to the site in June when the plant was in flower and subsequently we were able to identify it as False Lupin, a member of the Pea Family. The colony measured 6m x 4 m. It was situated between an abandoned sheep fank and the Powbrone Burn, SE of Glengavel Reservoir, Lanarkshire (VC 77).

The plant is a native of WN America. With regard to the British distribution "in the wild", it was established for about 25 years in gravel pits at Oundle, Northants (now gone) and on the riverside at Canonbie, Dumfriesshire. Since about 1978 it has been present as a garden relic at Howbie, Fetlar, Shetland.

One can only speculate as to how it became established in a remote Lanarkshire glen. Possibilities include accidental introduction with animal feed and bird-sown from Dumfriesshire.

A photographic flora of the Livingstone area James O'Hagan and Douglas McKean

A local Wild Flower Society member from Pumpherston (Livingston), Mr James O'Hagan, sent a selection of his work to the Royal Botanic Garden for me (D McK) to view. Some of the plants were new to the hectad but we still need to find out to which VC they belong, as the area is astride the boundary. Some of the less usual species included Walnut (*Juglans regia*), White Water-lily (*Nymphaea alba*), Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), Corsican Pine (*Pinus nigra*), Blue Anemone (*Anemone appenina*), Greater Butterfly-orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*), Thorn-apple (*Datura stramonium*), Purple Iris (*Iris sibirica*), Flowering Rush (*Butomus umbellatus*), Star-of-Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum umbellatum*) and Tree Lupin (*Lupinus lutea*). Several people commented on the saleable quality of these pictures and I for one was delighted to have seen them.

Putative *Ranunculus* x *levenensis* in Sutherland Gordon Rothero

During some survey work on Ben Hope for SNH, I came across the odd looking plant exhibited, growing on the stony margin of a coire lochan and covering an area some 1.8m x 0.4m. It was rooting at virtually every node and had extremely narrow leaves but had only one, rather mal-formed flower. I have not seen *Ranunculus* x *levenensis* but this plant seems to fit the description. Pat Evans is growing the plant on in the hope of a flower next year.

Escaped 'Pitsburgh' ivies in Ayrshire and Dunbartonshire Alison Rutherford

Rooted cuttings of escaped Pittsburgh ivies were shown. These are more tender than wild *Hedera helix*. These 'self-branching' cultivars are increasingly used outdoors and have been found as established escapes – five in VCs 75 and 79.

Some Wigtownshire daffodils Alan J Silverside

Wigtownshire (VC 74) has plenty of daffodils in the Spring. Some of these are in mass plantings by new roads and rather more are on road banks opposite farms and cottages. These are taken to be planted and under intermittent cultivation, not part of Wigtownshire's wild flora. In general they are modern cultivars. Others may have started as garden throw-outs but they have shown an ability to persist and sometimes to spread in wild places. Photographs of some of these were exhibited. Currently recognised Wigtownshire taxa are : *Narcissus poeticus* subsp *poeticus*, *N. pseudonarcissus* (sensu stricto), *N. bicolor*, *N. hispanicus*, *N.* x *incomparabilis* (covering *N. poeticus* x *N. pseudonarcissus* agg) *N. johnstonii* (covering *N. pseudonarcissus* agg x *triandrus*). Comments were made on taxonomic status in relation to nomenclature and application of hybrid epithets and some problems indicated.

Also on display were

Berwickshire County Rare Plant Register – progress.	Michael Braithwaite
Arctium in Berwickshire.	Michael Braithwaite
Botanical Society of Scotland stand.	Pat Cochrane
MapMate demonstration and Local Change.	Bob Ellis
Flowers and philately.	Barbara Hogarth

Scottish VC Recorders Meeting November 2004 CHRIS MYLES

54 members attended. Richard Pankhurst was in the Chair.

David Pearman made a plea for people who had contributed to the excellent

range of posters to go to the Manchester exhibition meeting if they could.
He reported that BSBI had signed an agreement with funding bodies which had allowed the advertising for a Development Officer with interviews planned for December. The officers role would be to provide an overarching steer to the Societies work, especially dealing with the agencies.

There are no other major data collection plans following Local Change. There is a proposal to update the hybrid book probably by employing someone to raise expertise and enthusiasm with members.

The publications committee has steered the revisions and additions to the handbooks series. *Callitriche* and *Cyperaceae* were very nearly finished. Attention would then move on to Docks and Knotweeds, Umbels and Grasses, the latter being at least 75% complete.

He asked whether the apparent decline in *Carex maritima* (Curved Sedge) was real or not.

Next the Chairman introduced Jim McIntosh the new BSBI Scottish Officer. Jim explained that he was based in the RBGE and supported by a steering group. His objectives though not completely finalised were to establish a Scottish base, supporting the work of the Scottish Committee, recorders and members. In particular he was to encourage younger people to become involved. One specific task would be developing rare plant registers. He would also be exploring the possibility of a recorders meeting in the future, possibly focussed on key groups, perhaps based at Kindrogan. He was also interested in developing a Scottish page on the BSBI web site.

Richard welcomed Bob Ellis who was co-ordinating the Local Change project. Bob thanked everyone for their effort on Local Change (and Atlas). He estimated that he had now got 70% of the data gathered so far. He requested the rest by the end of November if possible. He also now urgently needed the local assessments.

He had a steering group who would be helping with the analysis.

BSBI Scottish Officer Report

JIM McINTOSH

Since beginning as BSBI Scottish Officer in November, I've been doing a lot of setting up work; with computers, e-mail, internet, telephone and general office

space and facilities. I share an office in the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, with Heather McHaffie, Douglas McKean and other botanists and I find this a really stimulating environment in which to work. But because I live in Glasgow and the daily commute is so tedious, I have arranged to work from home for a couple days a week.

I have particularly enjoyed beginning to get to know BSBI vice-county recorders, office-bearers and fellow employees better. It's also been great working with ex-work colleagues at SNH, who have been incredibly supportive and I am really looking forward to continuing to expand and build my contacts in both the BSBI and partner organisations. In a strange way, the Scottish Officer post is really more about people than plants!

My Steering Group, which includes Richard Pankhurst (chair), David Pearman, Michael Braithwaite, Gordon Rothero and Ro Scott and Chris Sydes from SNH, has met twice so far, and we are currently finalising my Work Programme for the year ahead. However, I have already made a start on many of the main tasks. Two of the most time consuming to date have been organising a BSBI Scottish MapMate workshop for vice-county recorders and managing BSBI's Site Condition Monitoring involvement. For a full report on the BSBI's Monitoring work in Scotland in 2004 and in the year ahead, please see April's *BSBI News* (McIntosh 2005).

By the time you read this, the MapMate workshop will have been held in early April, and I hope it will have been a huge success! Before organising this MapMate workshop I asked those who were on the previous one, what they had thought of it, so I could hone this course to perfection (well almost!). One comment that almost everyone made was how brilliant the course handbook was! People found it particularly helpful for doing follow up work at home after the course. It has sections on data entry, sharing data, atlases & maps and schedules & catalogues.

If you use MapMate but have not been on a MapMate workshop, I think you'd find the handbook pretty helpful. If you would like a copy of the course handbook, please let me know. Contact me, Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer at 0131 248 2876 or j.mcintosh@rbge.ac.uk

Reference

McIntosh, J (2005). From the Scottish Officer. *BSBI News* 99, 7-8.

Allan McG Stirling:- Personal Reminiscence

P MACPHERSON

In late August 1966 Archie Kenneth and I had a date to do some "alpine bòtanising" on Meall a'Bhuiridh in Argyll. Allan Stirling had been visiting AK and accompanied us on the expedition. Such was their enthusiasm that, whereas I returned to the car park by chairlift, they walked down the gullies looking for hawkweeds.

I informed them that we were leaving Oban in October as I was taking up a post in Glasgow. In the spring of 1967 I received a letter from AS inviting our family to join the Andersonian Naturalists of Glasgow (now Glasgow Natural History Society). I used to tease that as he was treasurer and there were six of us...!

Our last trip together furth of Glasgow was to Ardnamurchan in 2001. Earlier in the season I had looked in vain for Pigmyweed (*Crassula aquatica*), but he located a tiny patch on the shore of Loch Shiel. The following day we went to look for, and he was the first to find Nordic Bladderwort (*Utricularia stygia*). At the newsagent in Acharacle we bought two (Glasgow) *Heralds*, as we were both in the habit of doing the crossword each day.

Between times we had many excursions together, local and further afield.
Field Cards, of necessity, have abbreviated names. When using a scientific name I frequently gave the wrong ending e.g. *Galium aparinum*. He would just quietly state the correct version- "*aparine*".

On a number of occasions each year he would come to our house. Post afternoon tea we would repair to my study where he would identify specimens for me. In addition to general species, he would also look at critical species such as brambles and roses, though always stating that he did so diffidently. After dinner we played snooker, at which we were fairly evenly matched.

In return for his help, I was always delighted to be able to show him plants that he had not seen before. He was particularly pleased to see Golden Chervil (*Chaerophyllum aureum*) at Callander and Marsh Saxifrage (*Saxifraga hirculus*) in Cumbria.

As joint editors of the *BSBI Scottish Newsletter* from issues 1-26, we had frequent meetings and correspondence; and no disagreements. We took it in turn to write the Editorial. I wonder if anyone ever noticed the change in style from one year to the next? I doubt it.

A formal obituary has been prepared for *Watsonia*.
On learning of his death, two of our VC Recorders felt that they would like to send a card of condolence. Not knowing of any family, they were sent to me—yes, I shall miss him.

Floral Change Over 16 Years In VCC 91 & 93

DAVID WELCH

Change was assessed by recording again in 2003/04 the tetrads (2 x 2 km squares) first recorded in 1987/88 in the BSBI Monitoring Scheme. Similar methods were used in both periods, with two or more visits at different seasons adding up to about 11 hours fieldwork for each tetrad. All habitats were checked, but inevitably substantial parts of the tetrads could only be viewed from afar.

In VC 93 (N Aberdeen) there were seven tetrads for which in both periods I was the sole or chief recorder. In VC 91 (Kincards) there were four tetrads and Eric Birse did the bulk of the recording in 1987/88 and myself in 2003/04. The VC 91 tetrads held more species than the VC 93, having richer soils and being entirely lowland. All the tetrads were full sized (400 ha) except one at the coast in VC 91; its species number was little affected since the combination of coastal and inland plants made up for its small extent.

The changes in species between the two periods have been categorised as real or misses for both gains and losses (Table 1). Apparent changes due to aggregate rather than segregate species being recorded were discounted. Additional categories were Deliberately Planted for gains and Errors for losses, these including wrong identification or locational mistakes made obvious by the use of GPS in 2003/04. All the categories were subdivided into probable and definite, the latter being easier to give for trees and long-lived perennials, or when a whole habitat had been destroyed.

The majority of the gains observed in 2003/04 were considered to have been misses in 1987/88 (Table 1). Reasons for species being missed will be discussed below, together with an assessment on the accuracy of the much smaller totals for missed losses in 2003/04.

Gains judged real were mostly contributed by aliens, the great majority being garden escapes or outcasts. The species having most gains were *Alchemilla mollis* (Lady's-mantle) [4 tetrads], *Polygonatum* agg. (Solomon's-seal) [3 tet-

rads], *Buddleia davidii* (Butterfly-bush), *Galanthus nivalis* (Snowdrop), *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* (Yellow Archangel) and *Narcissus* agg. (Daffodil) [all 2 tetrads]. Native species that had gains included *Lemna minor* (Common Duckweed), *Ranunculus peltatus* (Pond Water-crowfoot) and *Spergularia marina* (Lesser Sea-spurrey) [2, 1 and 3 tetrads respectively]. The only gains that might reflect climate warming were three by bramble species, two in the intermediate-altitude NJ62W tetrad, where woodlands at the foot of Bennachie appear to have been colonised since 1987/88.

Losses judged real were experienced by species of all types but native species far outnumbered aliens. Altogether 132 species had losses, most of them in only one tetrad; on average, tetrads suffered 15 losses. Only a quarter of the losses were considered definite, and some of the probable losses may prove to be misses when the tetrads are next recorded. Species types with most losses were in descending order: 1) freshwater and wetland, 2) arable weeds and 3) semi-natural grassland. The individual species with most losses were *Lolium multiflorum* (Italian Rye-grass) [4 tetrads] and *Centaurea montana* (Perennial Cornflower), *Odontites vernus* (Red Bartsia), *Phleum bertolonii* (Smaller Cat's-tail), *Ribes uva-ursi* (Gooseberry) and *Veronica agrestis* (Green Field-speedwell) [all 3 tetrads].

Discussion

Misses in 1987/88 were numerous in all tetrads but tended to be more frequent in the more species-rich tetrads; the upland tetrad 32W was an exception. For lowland tetrads with much farmland a greater proportion of the semi-natural habitats rich in species could be searched in the time available than in tetrads where the entire 400 ha had ground potentially worth searching. In all types of tetrad it is clear that the sites most productive of species were not fully discerned during the first survey, but in the second survey rich areas (identified from 1987/88 recording cards and maps) were quite quickly recorded, and the remaining time was spent searching further habitat rather than ground felt unproductive in 1987/88. So the 2003/04 totals are probably a fair reflection of the present species diversity, and in the next monitoring it is unlikely that many extra species will appear, and hence be classed as misses in 2003/04. But some of the losses judged real in 2003/04 were arable weeds, these resulting partly from the lack of recent cultivation in certain fields and also total herbicide treatment, so doubtless viable seeds remain and these species could reappear.

The size of recording unit in the present exercise was perhaps too small to allow

adequate assessment of change in marginal tetrads that had little cropped ground. But on the other hand larger units would have been less well searched, causing greater uncertainty in separating missed species from actual changes. The main findings from the monitoring in vice-counties 91 and 93, that alien species have been the chief gainers since 1987/88, and that native species of freshwater, wetland, arable land and semi-natural grassland are substantially declining, parallel the conclusions made for lowland Britain from analyses of the BSBI Atlas data collected in the 1950s and 1987-99.

Table 1. Total species, gains and losses for the 11 tetrads.

Tetrad	Total	Gains in 03/04			Losses in 03/04		
		Plntd.	Miss	Real	Error	Miss	Real
VC 91							
NO66J[1]	292		30	7	4	12	25
NO69W[1]	363		63	5	1	13	13
NO99A[1]	253[S]		55	3	2	10	9
NO99J	315	3	32	18	3	26	20
VC 93							
NJ32W	171		27	0		7	1
NJ62J=	249	13	17	14	1	2	21
NJ62W	232		35	6	1	14	9
NJ92J=	256	1	37	10		1	19
NJ95A=	253	3	35	6		11	26
NJ95J=	215	2	30	4		12	7
NJ95W=	223	5	26	4		13	16

= same single recorder in both periods
[1] single recorder in 2003/04
[S] tetrad with small extent, being at coast

Railway Lines: Beneficial to Brambles!

GH BALLANTYNE

"Aye" said the owner of the old station, "railways and brambles go together, don't they?". I had to agree, for there we were more or less surrounded by a species new to Scotland, festooning the former bridge and embankment and kept at a distance from the modern caravans only by continual cutting back. I was at the former LMS railway station at St Fillans, west of Crieff, following a query by Alan Newton, the national *Rubus* referee, as to the provenance of *R. bartonii* at the site. I'd come across it nearby in 1998 but named it wrongly. The question of

how it had got to Perthshire was intriguing as this particular species has its head-quarters in Wales and had not been seen previously north of south Lancashire, some 250 miles away.

It transpired the line from Crieff west to Balquhidder had closed in 1951, and some years later the station had been converted into a caravan site, but with the main buildings and platform kept intact. The present owner took over about 25 years ago and it was he who proferred the opening comment when I told him "his" bramble was an unusual one. Fortunately, he could offer an explanation: during the Second World War the railwaymen had converted the neighbouring field into allotments to help with the war effort, and there was therefore the probability that blackberries had been planted. This tied in nicely with the fact that Alan Newton had told me that *R. bartonii* had been taken into commercial cultivation by Long Ashton Research Station near Bristol - and had put it on the market in 1937/38, just in time for it to be available during the 1939-45 war. This seems quite convincing, especially as in England "Ashton Cross" as it had been dubbed has been recorded in odd places, not least as a probable escape from a fruit farm or a garden. After the closure, it must have been allowed to run wild.

Actually, I've been of the opinion that railways and brambles go together for quite some time. This view has been reinforced recently by the finding of a number of species new to Scotland by old lines, especially in Edinburgh. Here, *R. eleganti- spinosus* is now all over the city, as it is in several other east coast places, usually associated with railways. Alan Newton calls this the "LNER" bramble; readers of my vintage will recall that that company's main line was from London to Edinburgh and it would appear that this species, of hortal origin, seems to have had an especial connection with the allotments of LNER employees. More recently another escape *R. armeniacus* (*R. procerus*), has made its mark and in Edinburgh and in a number of other venues is becoming a pest. Not for nothing is it known as the 'Himalaya Giant', although owing to its robustness and size rather than its country of origin.

Perhaps it will soon have a companion in Scotland. An introduced bramble only too well-known in Australia and New Zealand because of its invasive habits - it has long been an official pest there - has been found in three widely separated sites, all by or near to railways: *R. phaeocarpus*. It was confirmed at North Queensferry in 2002; found at Penicuik in 2003; and a year later discovered in very considerable quantity not far from Dumfries, beside the old London-Carlisle-Stranraer line, closed in 1965. Its haunts are in SE England - could it be threatening to become a nuisance up here? By co-incidence, *R. bartonii* was also seen in Dumfries, so it too is spreading. And there could be other unknown invaders lurking elsewhere !

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND

Atlantic Oakwoods Symposium

First announcement

A Symposium on Atlantic Oakwoods will be held in the Corran Halls, Oban, Argyll on the 14 -16 September 2005. There will be two days of talks and discussion followed by a field excursion to study some of the local examples of these woods.

The aims of the meeting are: (1) to bring together research scientists, land managers, conservationists and all who share an interest in these woods; (2) to provide a forum in which to present current knowledge on the ecological diversity and past management of the woods; and (3) to identify needs for conservation and further research. The proceedings of the symposium will be published in a Symposium Special Issue of the Botanical Journal of Scotland.

The programme comprises 8 sessions, each with two or three speakers. These are:- Definition and Distribution; Genetic History; Cultural History; Present Structure and Composition (diversity and plant species groups - 3 sessions); Faunal Relationships; Conservation and Management Policy. There will also be a poster session.

The Symposium will be organised by the Botanical Society of Scotland and sponsored by the Forestry Commission, Forest Research and the British Ecological Society.

Booking forms and further information will be available from 28th February 2005 and can be obtained from Shiela Wilson, Institute of Geography, University of Edinburgh, Drummond Street, Edinburgh EH8 9XP, or from the website.

e-mail: shiela.wilson@ed.ac.uk
Website: http://www.geos.ed.ac.uk/abs/bss/

A limited number of bursaries will be provided for students.

Gallant Soldiers at Maryhill, Glasgow

P MACPHERSON & SJ LONGRIGG

For many years Maryhill was the base for the Glasgow regiment, the Highland Light Infantry (HLI), so it would seem appropriate that the first record for Gallant-soldier (*Galinsoga parviflora*) in Glasgow, and indeed Lanarkshire, should be from the Maryhill district. The first sighting (SJL) was at the base of a lamp post (26/569686) in August 2003. Subsequent search detected other plants beside another post and at the base of a wall.

There are said to be scattered localities for this S American plant up to central Scotland (Stace 1997), but Preston et al (2002) give no post-1987 Scottish records.

An exhibit was displayed at the autumn meetings of both the Glasgow Natural History Society and the Botanical Society of the British Isles. Quite a number of those who commented to us were under the impression that what was on display was the more common *Galinsoga quadriradiata*. This is understandable for two reasons: nomenclature change— Shaggy-soldier was previously *G ciliata* (obviously ciliate); pubescence— *G. parviflora* can be sparsely pubescent and pedicles may have glandular and eglandular hairs, though those in Shaggy-soldier tend to be rather larger. However, the receptacular scales in Gallant-soldier are mostly distinctly 3-lobed, the central lobe the largest, whereas Shaggy-soldier has, at most, only weak lateral lobes (Stace 1997).

The Maryhill plants have more-or-less glabrous stems and although they do have distinctly hairy pedicles, the receptacular scales are very definitely 3-lobed (Fig. 1) and we are confident of the diagnosis.

In 2004 seven plants were present, and so not having been a one off, is a further reason for making this report.

We are grateful to Elspeth Lindsay for executing the drawings.

References

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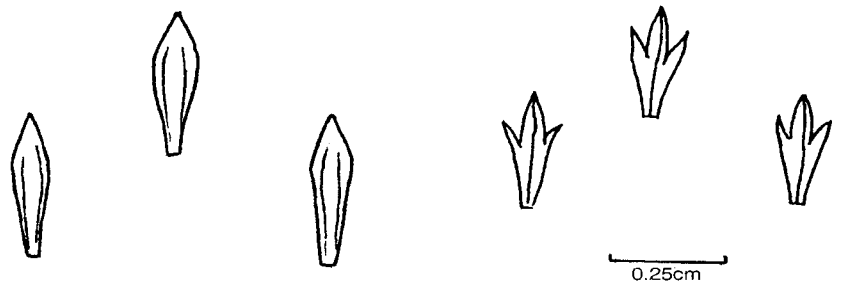

a) b)

Fig 1. a) receptacular scales from *Galinsoga quadriradiata*. b) trident scales from a Maryhill plant

Re-appearance of *Stachys arvensis* in VC 84 (West Lothian)

J MUSCOTT

One of my more exciting finds when I took over VC 84 in 1987 was a really "dirty" field of oats near the large oil shale bing at Broxburn. Among other weeds were Field Woundwort (*Stachys arvensis*) and Corn Mint (*Mentha arvensis*). What I did not realise at the time was that the field was being "reclaimed", and within a few years it had been cleaned up and was largely weed-free.

I thought that was the end of *Stachys arvensis* in West Lothian (there were a couple of other records of Corn Mint). However the field fell into one of the Local Change tetrads so I scoured it and its surroundings in 2003, without success. In late 2004 however I was amazed to discover the plant about a mile away from the previous site and in totally different circumstances. A rough and overgrown field gives access across the Union Canal to the other side of the bing, and both it and the bing itself are used by young motorcyclists. They have scoured a circuit in the field, and the *Stachys* was growing in short open turf close to the bare ground near the bridge.

I can only assume that the plant is included in the local seed bank, and likely to appear after any disturbance.

The motorcyclists have also had a profound effect on the flat top of the bing (not to mention the steep slopes they drive up and down), preventing the development of tall herbs, and opening up the bing surface - which may account for

the spread of Northern Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza purpurella*) on the north of the bing. It was present in relatively small amounts in 1987/88 but I counted over 1000 flowering spikes in 2003.

Stachys arvensis

The Rise and Fall (and Rise again?) of Corn Marigold J MUSCOTT

Corn Marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*) is one of our more attractive old cornfield weeds, and along with Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) and Corn Chamomile (*Anthemis arvensis*) forms part of a seed-mix that Local Authorities are now spreading around. I was surprised to see a colourful field of these and other weeds in front of an industrial development near Livingston in 2003 (Cornflower being new to VC 84), while in 2004 the same seed-mix was being sown on roadside verges in East Lothian. (Fig 1).

This is particularly ironic in the case of Corn Marigold, which farmers have been trying to extirpate from cornfields for several thousand years. Apparently it was introduced by Neolithic farmers as a seed contaminant. So successful did it become that by the Middle Ages farmers were being ordered to uproot it as a noxious weed (sounds a bit like the present campaign against Ragwort), but it was still a serious pest in Victorian times. It has taken modern farming methods and weed-killers to get rid of it finally from cornfields, and now, regretting its passing, Local Authorities and gardeners are busy re-introducing it!

Another plant which has had its ups and downs is Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*). In Elizabethan times farmers near dockyards were forced to grow it as the fibres were used to make rope for the navy. Last century it was first banned; then varieties low in marijuana were grown for oil. Perhaps soon it will be grown for medical purposes again. It is still a component of some birdseed mixes as my brother discovered when he found it growing in his garden. He did not know what it was at the time, but quickly uprooted it when someone enlightened him (he was a schoolteacher). I was rather annoyed as I did not get a chance to see it, and I did not know what it looked like either!

Fig 1

Chrysanthemum segetum Centaurea cyanus Anthemis arvensis

Crassula tillaea – a new County record for VC 73

DAVID M HAWKER

The New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora shows the distribution of *Crassula tillaea* (Mossy Stonecrop) as a species native to the south and east of the Severn-Wash line, and as an alien in 3x 10km squares around Inverness (VC 96 Easterness & Nairn), and in 1 in Northern Ireland (VC H38 Co. Down).

During the BSBI meeting to Loch Ken (VC 73) in SW Scotland in late August 2002, the party of 13 members parked on a flat wide roadside verge (NGR 272048 568341), which a year earlier had been used by Regional Council workmen re-building and cementing a nearby dry-stone dyke. Within seconds of leaving the car, one of the party had identified *C. tillaea* which formed a carpet of tiny, profusely seeding plants in excess of 1000 in number, in a sward 1-2cm high.

Subsequent monitoring of the site has shown the population to extend over an area of approximately 30m x 5m on dry, compacted ground with an overall vegetation cover of ~65%. Associated species included *Sagina procumbens* (Procumbent Pearlwort), *Gnaphalium uliginosum* (Marsh Cudweed), *Ornithopus perpusillus* (Bird's-foot), *Medicago lupulina* (Black Medick) and *Aphanes arvensis* (Parsley-piert), collectively forming ~45% ground cover, amongst the grasses were *Agrostis capillaris* (Common Bent), *Festuca ovina* (Sheep's-fescue) and *Poa annua* (Annual Meadow-grass). Other species included *Plantago major* (Greater Plantain), *Cerastium fontanum* (Common Mouse-ear), *Senecio jacobaea* (Common Ragwort), *Leontodon autumnalis*

(Autumn Hawkbit), *Veronica serpyllifolia* (Thyme-leaved Speedwell) and *Sonchus arvensis* (Perennial Sow-thistle). The community corresponds best to the National Vegetation Classification OV20b *Poa annua-Sagina procumbens* community (*Lolium perenne-Chamomilla suaveolens* sub-community) of Rodwell's British Plant Communities. The whole area was very heavily grazed by rabbits, hence the sward height.

How had the plants arrived here? The nearest known colonies are at least 115km (70 miles) distant across the Irish Sea or 400km (250 miles) from the nearest mainland colonies in S. Lincolnshire (VC53) or around Inverness. Did they arrive in building materials imported for the Council workmen? Investigations via the local Roads Dept depot showed that the Council did not import building material from outwith the Region and that contractors were local. From soil or mud on cars or their occupants from Northern Ireland – over 1.1 million vehicles cross from N. Ireland to Scotland annually, with 800,000 of these travelling through VC 73 via the A75 trunk road about 12 km (8 miles) to the south of this record? By visiting bird-watchers from all over the UK who regularly stop at this point to observe the flock of wintering Greenland white-fronted geese? By tourists from Lincolnshire or further south? By whatever agency the plants arrived, this represents a large leap from the nearest recorded colonies. It will be interesting to monitor the spread from this new site in the coming years.

Just prior to this record, plants were noted from West Lothian in July 2002 (Muscott 2003)

Reference

Muscott, J (2003). *Crassula tillaea* in West Lothian. *BSBI Scottish Newsletter* 25, 31.

Raasay – 2004 Update

STEPHEN J BUNGARD

During a July excursion to Leac, visiting pteridologist Martin Rickard pointed out several plants of *Dryopteris x complexa*, the hybrid between *D. affinis* (Scaly Male-fern) and *D. filix-mas* (Male-fern), a new taxon for Raasay and for the vice-county. We made no attempt to determine the subspecies of the *D. affinis* parent!

Twelve semi-mature trees of *Quercus cerris* (Turkey Oak) planted near Henderson's Bridge were spotted. It may seem surprising to have missed a patch of twelve big trees, but they are tall and thin with few leaves below about 10m and

amongst many beech trees of much the same height and maturity.

Three plants of *Viola tricolor* ssp. *tricolor* (Wild Pansy) were found in a field at Oskaig – the first Raasay record for many years. Continuing the *Viola* theme, two plants of *V. arvensis* (Field Pansy), sprung out of some soil taken from East Suisnish and transported to West Suisnish for garden use. This is the first Raasay record since the 1930's flora when it was reported from Fladday.

The spike-rush in the salt marsh area at Oskaig is *Eleocharis uniglumis* (Slender Spike-rush). This is the first Raasay record since Heslop Harrison in 1951. It is plentiful there and is also present in the Arish Burn estuary.

Hypericum tetrapterum (Square-stalked St John's-wort) was found to be present in a marsh to the north of Manish Beag. This is the first Raasay record since the 1930's flora when it was recorded near Arnish.

At Brochel, two flowering spikes of *X Dactylodenia st-quintinii*, the hybrid between *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Fragrant Orchid) and *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted-orchid) were found on the lower slopes of the castle mound. Again, this is the first Raasay record since Heslop Harrison in 1951.

"Site Condition Monitoring" of the Raasay SSSI confirmed *Potamogeton filiformis* in the southern end of Loch na Meilich - a record from the 1989 SNH Loch Survey. (There is a much bigger population in Loch a' Chadacharnaich.) The only species covered by this work that gives any cause for concern is *Sorbus rupicola* (Rock Whitebeam) where a couple of trees from the very small population have been lost in recent years and there is no sign of regeneration – although one tree was covered in fruit in 1991.

Our First Year as BSBI Vice-County Recorders for East Ross (VC 106)

BARBARA & BRIAN BALLINGER

2004 was our first full year as BSBI vice-county recorders. At first we felt rather daunted by the VCR role, particularly in such a large vice-county with so much rough, remote and mountainous terrain. We already owned a small area of bog woodland and a flat near Tain, so we thought we knew East Ross reasonably well. However, we soon began to realise that much of East Ross was even more inaccessible than we had thought. Taking on the VCR role was going to be a big challenge! We are very grateful for all the help and support from Peter Wortham and Ro Scott, without which, I am sure we would have struggled.

An immediate task was to survey the eight outstanding Local Change tetrads, two of which were very remote. So we began investing in new camping equipment, but wished that we could also hire Nepalese porters for our long treks! Fortunately we managed without camping, thanks to a helpful Dane, who ferried us along Loch Mullardoch and an estate worker who gave us a lift in his Landrover at Alladale. This did, however, mean that our time on site was limited - as it had been during the Monitoring Scheme survey. Our Local Change efforts were well rewarded with discoveries of new locations for *Pilularia globulifera* (Pillwort), and *Vaccinium microcarpum* (Small Cranberry), as well as the first record for over one hundred years of *Berula erecta* (Lesser Water-parsnip) near Tain.

We also enjoyed carrying out Site Condition Monitoring work in the Kyle of Sutherland SSSI for SNH with the help of Mary Dean. The two target species were *Carex recta* (Estuarine Sedge), which we found in some profusion, and *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid), which we did not refind unfortunately. As if by compensation, however, we did record *Pilularia globulifera* growing in new locations close to some of the *Carex recta* populations. There were a couple of older records from elsewhere in the Kyle of Sutherland and it was interesting and quite unusual, as Heather McHaffie noted, to find *Pilularia* in a tidal estuary.

It has been a great privilege going through the historical records and paperwork of previous BSBI recorders, which we have inherited, including the particularly detailed and interesting notes of Ursula Duncan. However our more immediate problem was that the old card index which she set up was nearly full and we had a major administrative task in arranging a new index for post-atlas records. With very limited previous experience of databases, we have had to work hard to learn MapMate and Recorder 2002, (the former now the BSBI preferred option).

After the Local Change and these other projects, we are now beginning to develop a County Rare Plant Register, with the aim of extending our computer database further. We still need to do a lot more in the field, particularly in confirming and locating plant records. Our information about locally scarce species is often more limited than that for national rarities. However, during the year, we travelled far and wide and visited a wide range of sites throughout East Ross, particularly noting exact locations of scarcer plants.

Our outings included visits to see some of VC 106's most interesting montane

plants, including *Artemisia norvegica* (Norwegian Mugwort) and *Gnaphthalium norvegicum* (Highland Cudweed), which were amongst our botanical highlights of 2004!

To sum up, we have found that being vice-county recorders has given our botanising a new focus and sense of purpose, and has made us much more careful in our determinations. We have really enjoyed getting to know our area better, and it has been particularly interesting to discover places where we have never been before. In the coming year we look forward to continuing to improve our knowledge of the vice-county, and our computer and botanical skills and to maintain and develop our links with a variety of natural history and botanical societies.

Fumaria purpurea in Scotland

HEATHER S McHAFFIE

It is difficult to be very precise about the current distribution of arable plants. Because of the changing nature of arable crops, the fact that an arable weed is recorded in one place one year, means that it is unlikely to be found in the same place the next year. *Fumaria purpurea* (Purple Ramping-fumitory) makes occasional appearances around the country but it is difficult to give an estimate of its abundance when it is unlikely to occur in the same place every year. Also, as *Fumaria* are not always the easiest plants to identify, it is also possible that sites are overlooked and I would like to encourage more people to look at these very attractive plants.

I found *F. purpurea* in five sites during 2004. One was a repeat of a site from the previous year on Longman Point landfill site in Inverness. The mound of earth closing off the site had still not grown over and plants were well advanced and flowering in early June. Oddly enough they had all died off without a trace by the end of the summer, showing how transitory these annual plants can be. The second site to the east of Inverness was in a field where Portacabins stood while the water treatment plant was modified. After the cabins were removed the field was ploughed and left. It had a good crop of weeds including abundant *Fumaria capreolata* with pale creamy-white, purple tipped flowers, large sepals, and long bracts. Mixed in with it were two plants of *F. purpurea*. This is not very well named as the flowers can be very pale when young, becoming pinker as they age. Like *F. capreolata* it has large sepals and long bracts and as the *capreolata* flowers flush pink after fertilisation these two plants look very similar. When they occur together the best way to distinguish between them is to look at the comparative length of the flower spike, long in *purpurea* (short in *capreolata*) and the stem which supports the spike, which is about the same

length as the flower spike in *purpurea* (but considerably longer in *capreolata*). There were three sites for *F. purpurea* around North Berwick. The first was reported by a sharp-eyed *Cochlearia* student, Estelle Gill, when she had gone to North Berwick by train to visit her scurvy grasses. As she walked along a footpath down from the station she saw a lot of *Fumaria* climbing a fence and scrambling over a bank. These plants are in the grounds of a sheltered housing complex built in 2000 on the site on a hotel. Although regularly sprayed with herbicide *F. purpurea* reappears from seed and possibly benefits from having the site kept open. The second site might be rather similar. On the west side of North Berwick the very last field has a broad pavement between it and the road. The edge is sprayed and occupied by mostly bare ground, *Equisetum arvense* (Field Horsetail) and four species of *Fumaria*. There is a very little of the commoner *F. officinalis* and *F. muralis* but larger quantities of *F. densiflora* and the most frequent species is *F. purpurea*. Yet again these species are thriving in a marginal habitat, not within the regime of a conventionally managed field.

The third site on the west side of Drem is just before the railway bridge. The council have planted wild flower seed in a wide strip between the road and the hedge. Mixed in with these plants are many native species that formed a seed bank in the soil that must have lain undisturbed since it was used as a verge to the re-aligned road over the railway. *Fumaria* are particularly prominent here with the same four species that occurred just west of North Berwick. There are large amounts of *F. densiflora*, and also *F. muralis* with smaller sepals than usual, a few plants of *F. officinalis*, and right at the back near the hedge, small amounts of *F. purpurea*. These are unusually slender but still have relatively large sepals and long bracts.

All these records for *F. purpurea* have been confirmed by Tim Rich and will be in the herbarium at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. I found it helpful to keep a reference collection when I first started looking at *Fumaria* and this is a useful resource to build up. I also stuck sepals in the back of my field notebook with sellotape, five or six sepals from each plant. This is a good way to see the relative sizes of the different species and also the range within species. If any likely specimens are found they should be pressed to give the best preservation and I will be very pleased to look at them. Workshops have been held in Inverness and Edinburgh and it is planned to hold two more in 2005. These will be at Edinburgh on the 30th July and Vane Farm in Fife on the 31st July. To book a place phone 0131 248 2876 or email h.mchaffie@rbge.org.uk

Towards a New Arcadia.

LUKE W GASKELL

With population pressures and globalisation rapidly consuming the earth's last wild places, a form of pseudo-naturalism is back in vogue in the countryside Farmers and landowners are being actively encouraged to 'recreate' lost habitats, planting hedges, and sowing fields of wild flowers to form an ersatz pre-industrial landscape scattered amongst the large scale farms producing commodity foods.

Until relatively recently, botanising in the farmed countryside produced lists with few deliberate introductions, the main exceptions being crop plants and trees which had usually been planted for economic or sporting purposes. A plethora of initiatives from government and other organisations has resulted in many 'native' plants appearing in the most unlikely places. This is going to obscure our understanding of the range and ecological preferences of these plants. Although I am not sure how much this matters, it is something of which we should be aware.

I will illustrate this trend with some examples from the Central Borders. There are few if any truly natural woods in Britain; trees and shrubs have always been introduced and managed, but recently the scale of planting of native species has greatly increased. Many remnants of former woodland, for example the hill cleughs along the Ettrick and Yarrow valleys are now being fenced off to allow regeneration. This is admirable but I am less enthusiastic about the large scale underplanting of species that are deemed to have been present but which are now absent. Planting oak, rowan, birch, hazel and juniper is not in itself wrong, but natural regeneration might produce more interesting results; and though there are good nurseries using local provenance seed, some species and cultivars are definitely alien.

There is another aspect to this well-intentioned drive to plant more broad leaved trees. Borders farmers naturally choose to plant the steep or rocky areas that are inaccessible to machinery and have therefore remained unimproved. Since these are the areas that will probably have the more interesting assemblages of surviving plants they are less suitable for this treatment. The Forest Authority, which grant aids planting, apparently has no brief to check whether the sites selected are botanically important so public money is spent by one arm of government effectively reducing biodiversity which other bodies are being paid to protect. An extreme example of this is the recent planting of a community woodland on the only extant *Crepis mollis* (Northern Hawk's-beard) site in the Borders.
Hedges are currently being planted with great enthusiasm despite having lost their original principal function of stock enclosure. Most are 80% *Crataegus*

monogyna (Hawthorn) with a range of other species in line with grant requirements. A new hedge on an upland site near Westruther VC 81 is typical. It includes *Acer campestre* (Field Maple), *Euonymus europaeus* (Spindle), *Sorbus aria* (Common Whitebeam) and *Viburnum opulus* (Guelder-rose). A good hedge for Southern England, but not yet typical of the Borders.

Ponds are another recent enthusiasm. Every farm it seems now has a pond, and quite a few destroy good marshy habitats when they are created. They are often stocked with plants not normally found in the locality. The community pond at Smailholm village in VC 80 features: *Ranunculus lingua* (Greater Spearwort), *Butomus umbellatus* (Flowering-rush), *Stratiodes aloides* (Water-soldier), *Egeria densa* (Large-flowered Waterweed) and *Hydrilla verticillata* (Hydrilla).

Another recent innovation is the availability of grants to create herb rich grassland. The popular Rural Stewardship Scheme, which is funded by modulation, (in effect a 'green tax' on mainstream farm production subsidies) and by the Scottish Executive has an option..."To convert arable or improved grassland to species diverse grassland...." it states that "any existing cover must be destroyed" and that "the site must be sown with a low productivity grass and herb mix agreed with SERAD to create a new sward; seed of local provenance should be obtained wherever possible." An example is given approximating to a MG 5 *Cynosurus cristatus - Centaurea nigra* grassland community of the National Vegetation Classification (Rodwell, 1992). However wild flower seed is expensive, and few farmers or advisors have the expertise to match sites to Rodwell's vegetation classification, if indeed it is ever possible to work backwards from an arable field to a mature grassland. Seed tends to be bought from seed merchants in standard mixes.

I contacted a leading supplier whose standard and somewhat bland wild flower mix comprises 20% Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), 20% Selfheal, (*Prunella vulgaris*) 13% Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), 13% Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), 13% Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), 14% Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) *and* 7% Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*). (£150 per kilo + VAT.) This is less than half the list of constants in an MG5 grassland. Furthermore, though there is a supplier of Scottish provenance wild flower seed, most seed is grown in England, or even on the continent and this supplier's seed was mainly multiplied in Gloucestershire.

I visited a field at Townhead farm near Melrose VC 80 that had been sown in 2004 with the above mix. The sown species were generally growing well, though without grazing the Ribwort Plantain and Oxeye Daisy were tending to

take over. More interesting to me was the presence of a good range of local arable weeds as well as some oddities. There were three plants of *Chrysanthemum segetum* (Corn Marigold), one of *Centaurea cyanus* (Cornflower) and one of *Silene gallica* (Small-flowered Carchfly). These are presumably seed impurities and it is unlikely that they will persist.

The local council roads department uses more Southern mixes. *Daucus carota* (Carrot) seems to be quite well established on a verge outside Galashiels sewage works, and the new verge at Clovenfords VC 79 had *Bromus secalinus* (Rye Brome), *Medicago sativa* (Lucerne) and *Vicia sativa* ssp.*sativa,* (Common Vetch), none of which are normally resident in Selkirkshire.

Finally, some farms are planting 'cornfield annuals' and unharvested crop mixes, again as part of Rural Stewardship, or to assist grey partridge, a priority species in the local BAP (biodiversity action plan.) Unharvested crops are mixes of cereals and *Brassicas* put down for one or two years and as the name suggests neither cut nor grazed. The plants in these mixes can be quite exotic, including Quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa*) Rye (*Secale cereale*) or more commonly Triticale (X *Triticosecale*), sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp), and Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*). At Oldcastles farm near Chirnside VC 81, a large area was sown last year with *Centaurea cyanus, Chrysanthemum segetum* and *Papaver rhoeas* (Common Poppy), which made a good show but could cause unwary recorders some confusion if dormant seed germinates in, say, ten years time. It is not usually difficult to grow cornfield weeds but I feel it would be more appropriate to allow remnant population to expand which they can do very readily once spraying and the excessive use of fertiliser stops.

In conclusion I think that it is very encouraging that there is so much interest in landscape and wildlife in the countryside. I do however worry that a rather unsatisfactory feeling of design, limited by the partial knowledge of its practitioners, is creeping into the countryside. The consensus artificiality of the eighteenth century park landscape, visible beyond the haha, is moving surreptitiously into the wider agricultural landscape. Nature, on the whole, has a better imagination than man, and can be left, once restraints have been removed, to arrange things with a pleasing complexity of her own.

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Rodwell, J.S. (ed.) (1998). *British Plant Communities*: Volume 3. Cambridge. p 540.

Scottish Executive (2003) . *Rural Stewardship Scheme*. Edinburgh. p 124.

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BSBI SCOTTISH AGM HELD AT THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN EDINBURGH AT 2.30 PM ON SATURDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2004

1 Welcome and present
The Chairman welcomed 70 BSBI members and friends to the meeting. He extended a special welcome to BSBI President, Richard Price and others from Wales, to David Pearman and Bob Ellis and to Plantlife representatives Deborah Long and Trevor Dines. He gave a special thanks to Summerfield Books for attending the meeting.

2 Apologies
Apologies were received from, Elaine Bullard, James Fenton, Catriona Murray, Ros Smith, Allan Stirling and Mark Watson.

3 Minutes of AGM of 1 Nov 2003
Draft minutes had been published in the *BSBI Scottish Newsletter* No 26 and were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4 Business arising
None that was not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5 Chairman's report
The Chairman, Richard Pankhurst, reported that he was pleased to hear that there had been good progress made in Scotland on the Local Change project.

The Chairman reported on the Site Condition Monitoring carried out over the year. SNH had asked for BSBI help in monitoring some larger upland SSSIs. Although work had been hampered by bad weather and a late start a reasonable amount had been achieved by a small number of volunteers to whom the Chairman expressed his thanks.

The Chairman introduced Jim McIntosh the new BSBI Scottish Officer who was warmly welcomed by the members. Jim, who had started work that week, explained that his post was jointly funded by SNH and BSBI. The post's principle objectives were to build and support the voluntary network, to encourage younger botanists to become involved in the work of BSBI, to support the work of the Scottish Committee, VCRs and members. Early tasks were to agree conservation objectives with SNH with a particular focus on Site Condition Monitoring and BAP species. He was also looking to encourage the development of rare plant registers in Scotland.

The Chairman was keen that BSBI and Plantlife worked together on projects where there was a clear benefit in doing so. He encouraged members to contribute to Plantlife's current Juniper survey.

The Chairman concluded by noting the success of having joint recorderships in VCs 101 and 88. He suggested that knowledgeable recorders wishing to visit on a regular basis to help the recording effort in Scotland, particularly in the more remote areas, would be particularly welcome and supported the idea of joint recorderships to encourage this.

6 Honorary General Secretary
David Pearman reported that a Development Officer for the BSBI was being recruited and would be in post sometime early in the new year. He noted that quite a few vice-county recorders in Scotland had not claimed their free copy of the VC Census Catalogue. He also announced that the new Flora of Skye had now been sent to the printers.

7 BSBI Scottish Newsletter
Peter Macpherson reported that Edition No. 26 had been distributed to most people in May. However Jackie Muscott, who stuffed and labelled the newsletter once printed, noticed that labels for some members were missing. This was due to some being missed from the original mailing list and this error was eventually corrected with all newsletters sent out by August.

He sought guidance from the meeting on the inclusion of a larger than normal contribution in the next Newsletter. This is a report of the herbarium of Robert Brown whose Scottish specimens are in the British Museum. Robert Brown who was born in Montrose was an important figure living between 1773 and 1858. He worked with Banks, took charge of the Linnaean library and was the first person to describe the nucleus and Brownian motion. The article would run to seven pages but the meeting agreed that this should be accepted.

8 Field Meetings
2004. Stephen Bungard reported that a successful programme of 7 meetings had taken place attended by between 4 and 17 people. Most of these meetings had been tetrad recording for Local Change. Stephen thanked all those who had organised and led them.

2005. Current proposals are for meetings in Orkney, Aberdeen, Skye, Kirkcudbrightshire and Wigtownshire.
Further details would appear in the Year Book.

9 Election of Committee Members

Jackie Muscott had had to retire from the Committee during the year due to ill health. The Chairman thanked her for her contributions and wished her well in her recovery. He also expressed appreciation of the work done by the three members retiring from the committee; Gordon Rothero, Phil Lusby and Ian Strachan.

Although this leaves four spaces on the committee no nominations have been received by the secretary. The Committee therefore nominated three people who have indicated that they are prepared to serve. They are Heather McHaffie, Jeanette Hall and Alastair Godfrey.

There being no other nominations they were proposed by Stephen Bungard and seconded by Gordon Rothero en bloc and elected unanimously.

10 Afternoon talk and Evening arrangements

The talk by David McCosh was entitled "Hawkweeds: the pleasures of curiosity". David had a handout for those who will contribute records for this group. The evening meal would be held in the RBG canteen followed by members' slide presentation.

11 AOCB

On the question of funds there were very few transactions undertaken by the committee on which to report. Michael Braithwaite reported that the development fund had continued to grow and that this fund was helping to meet the costs of the Scottish Officer.

A request was made to find some way of publishing more information about the exhibits. While extracts appeared in the newsletter some exhibits contained a lot of information and it was difficult to see it all in the day. It was agreed that the possibility of making at least some of the information available electronically via the web site would be explored by the committee.

Richard Price said how nice it was to visit Scotland again and see old faces. He mentioned that in Wales BSBI had a memorandum of agreement with CCW (Countryside Council for Wales) which gave VCRs access to 1:10000 maps and suggested that something similar may be possible in Scotland.

Chris Miles November 2004

A New Species for Scotland – Spotted Rock-rose on Coll

LYNNE FARRELL

On the 9th June 2000, Ross, Julie, young Rowanne Lilley and myself were gently botanising around the Sorisdale area at the north end of Coll. We were supposed to be having a few days off from work, and simply enjoying the beauties of the island. but we ended up working most of the week. However, this was an afternoon off, and we decided to park at the north end and walk across to the lovely beaches at Garbh-ard Mor. As it was a pleasant day we went around the coastline. Rowanne was a few months old and I was teaching her how to crawl in my spare time, but today she was being back-packed.

I remember looking at the rocky outcrops just above the coastline near Rubha Sgor-innis and listing the species growing on one of them, so that Ross and Julie could compare notes. Then I said- 'Well you won't believe me, but I think this is *Tuberaria guttata*, which I have seen recently growing in the Med. It's a Red Data Book species in Britain and the nearest site is in North Wales.' There were 2 rosettes only and no inflorescences. I was certain of my identification as the veining is very distinctive- look for yourselves the next time you come across the plant. However, I just made a note and said further 'It is a very distinctive plant when it flowers, quite unmistakable, so I guess someone will come across it one day in flower and really confirm it'. I meant to go back to the area over the next few years but someone beat me to it, as you will all know from reading *BSBI News*!

When I received an e-mail from Simon Wellock, new RSPB man on Coll, in late June 2004, saying he and his friends, Alison and John Hawcroft from Derbyshire, had found what they thought was Spotted Rock-rose at Sorisdale and kept a specimen in his freezer, I was a bit doubtful, as Simon had misidentified another, commoner species a few weeks earlier. Then I remembered my visit. I asked him if he could send a fresh specimen but he said that there were only eight plants. However, he would get another friend, Tony Oliver, a keen photographer who had recently come to live on Coll from Anglesey (where *Tuberaria* grows!!) to take a digital picture, which he would then send to me.

I was talking to David Pearman about plans for visiting Coll for Local Change recording and happened to mention Simon's e-mail. His reaction was rather sceptical, as mine had been initially. Then the next day another e-mail from Simon came with Tony's lovely pictures attached. There was no doubting it now- a very clear, and colourful, close-up of a Spotted Rock-rose flower looked out at me from the screen. I forwarded it to David, who did not open it until

later in the day. Then the phone rang and he said ' It certainly looks like it. How amazing!'

In early August 2004, I visited Coll with Ro Scott, and David and Hilary Hawker for Local Change recording and Site Condition Monitoring purposes. We collected Simon and he took us to his spot. We admired, photographed some rather wizened plants and counted 32 individuals in three patches on a rather bare rock outcrop. Associated species were *Calluna vulgaris* (Heather), *Erica cinerea* (Bell Heather), *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting), *Agrostis canina* (Velvet Bent) and *Festuca ovina* (Sheep's-fescue).
I realised a few weeks later after consulting my old notebooks that where I had found the 2 rosettes was not the same place as Simon had found his. Therefore there must be at least 2 sites for the species on Coll. I sent David a first class letter to the Coll hotel, where he was staying after exertions on Rum, and asked him to search my site. Unfortunately he did not find *Tuberaria* there, but there may well be more sites for this exciting new species on Coll and may be also on other west coast Scottish islands. The habitat and environmental conditions are certainly suitable.

There are two subspecies of *Tuberaria guttata*- subspecies *breweri* is often diffuse and branched from the base, and grows to about 10cms high. Its upper leaves are usually exstipulate, oblong, scarcely narrower than the lower leaves. Bracts are usally present and conspicuous. This subspecies is native to Britain and Ireland, found on exposed rocky moorland near the sea on Anglesey, and in West Cork, West Galway and West Mayo, where it is very local and rare. It is considered to be an endemic subspecies. Subspecies *guttata* is erect, simple or branched. Its upper leaves are oblong-linear, stipulate and much narrower than the lower. There are no bracts. This is also a native subspecies found on dry cliffs on Jersey and Alderney. It is also very local and scarce. It is also found in the south Mediterranean extending north to NW Germany, and in the Canaries.

The plants on Coll were rather dried up by the time I saw them in August and it is difficult to say exactly which subspecies they might be. On studying the photos sent by Tony Oliver, the plants appear to have thinner upper leaves without stipules, and bracts appear to be present. The plants are relatively diffuse, and branched from near the base. Most of the plants were small but some exceeded 10cms in August, by which time they may have elongated when in fruit. The habitat was certainly rocky and near the sea. So, on balance, I would suggest subspecies *breweri*, which is the one found on Anglesey, and the closest known site to the one on Coll. However, I would like to do some more checking of specimens both in the field and the herbarium before confirming this.

So when you are next pottering about on the west coast, keep your eyes open, and always have the courage of your convictions and trust your identification skills. It is possible to identify some interesting plants from their vegetative characteristics but other botanists might need a flower for confirmation.
I am delighted that Simon took the trouble to contact me soon after he and his friends had found the plant. We have Tony to thank for his excellent photos, taken in the morning before the petals fell. We agreed to a press release, and the story of Scotland's newest plant appeared on the front pages of *The Herald* and *The Scotsman*, with an article in the *Oban Times* and mention on BBC news.

What's doing in Clyde Isles (VC 100)

ANGUS C HANNAH

Three years ago, I inherited from Tony Church an admirable set of records for Arran, due mainly to himself and Tony Smith. The other islands, however, had been sadly neglected from lack of anyone to record the flora. The only list I had for Bute was that of James Robertson (1768), though I now know of one other (Ballantyne, 1911), which Jim McIntosh is tracking down for me. Inevitably, the Atlas was seriously deficient in its squares unique to Bute, and I welcome the opportunity we are being promised to take on responsibility for up-dating it.

I divided Bute and Great Cumbrae into 'natural' districts averaging about 1km^2 but varying widely in size and shape to match the grain of the habitat, and am aiming to produce as comprehensive lists as possible for all of these. This is an interesting exercise in itself, as well as providing the basis of a check-list for each island. I hope to publish an annotated Bute list later this year, and a booklet for Cumbrae is planned in collaboration with Dr John Allen of the Marine Station, Millport, who has a fine collection of photos. Arran already has a published check-list, with hectad distributions, thanks to the two Tonys. An updated edition is currently being printed, and we have taken pains to check all discrepancies with the Atlas, as well as adding new hectad records.

Only one LC tetrad landed in VC100 (others fell in the Clyde!), and that was a rather dull area of granitic upland on the west of Arran, where a BSBI field meeting recorded 105 taxa in 1987. GPS proved its worth when a small area of outcropping schist was shown to lie inside the lowest corner of the tetrad, yielding a couple of dozen additional species in flushed turf, including *Galium boreale* (Northern Bedstraw) and *Thalictrum alpinum* (Alpine Meadow-rue) at relatively low altitude (150m). Satisfying for the recorder, but liable I fear to skew the national results in an unhelpful way!

I have started work on a CRPR, but many questions remain to be resolved.

What to include (hybrids, subspecies, critical taxa, nationally scarce species represented only by casuals, etc.), how much information to offer by way of annotation, and more general considerations of the target readership and sales potential if any — advice on any of these matters would be welcomed.

Botany Notes 2004 VC 95 – Moray

IAN P GREEN

The dunes at Findhorn (NJ06) produced the most exciting find of 2004, *Vulpia fasciculata* (Dune Fescue) growing with *Hypochaeris glabra* (Smooth Cat's-ear). This *Vulpia* is new for Moray, but also at present the only known site in Scotland and even more impressive is the most northern site in the world. Also found on the dunes was a well established colony of *Clematis tangutica* (Orange-peel Clematis) new for Moray as well and a patch of *Dianthus caryophyllus* (Clove Pink), a second record for Moray. Two plants of *Phyllitis scolopendrium* (Hart's-tongue) were found growing on a wall in the village of Findhorn; this is a rare fern in the north half of Scotland.

Further along the coast at Kingston (NJ36) three plants of *Picris hieracioides* (Hawkweed Oxtongue) were found growing on a made up bank, this was also new for Moray. On the nearby Lein a new site for *Carex diandra* (Lesser Tussock-sedge) was discovered though only a few plants. Just over a mile away on the banks of the old railway line at Garmouth (NJ36) a new hybrid was found for the county *Hypericum x desetangsii* (*H. maculatum* x *H. perforatum*) (Des Etangs' St John's-wort).

At Knockando (NJ14) about 200 plants of *Potentilla norvegica* (Ternate-leaved Cinquefoil) were found well established on the old railway sidings, where it was once before reported in 1956. Also growing with it were a few plants of *Rorippa palustris* (Marsh Yellow-cress) a rare species in Moray.

The car park for Christies Garden Centre at Fochabers (NJ35) produced three new non-native species for Moray *Acaena anserinifolia* (Bronze Pirri-pirri-bur), *Veronica longifolia* (Garden Speedwell) and *Clinopodium grandiflorum* (Greater Calamint). A surprise though was to find a single specimen of the native *Huperzia selago* (Fir Clubmoss) growing on the edge of the car park, not a place one would expect to find this plant.

Surveying for the 'BSBI Local Change' produced three new non-native species for VC 95. At Grantown-on-Spey in (NJ02J) two plants of *Helleborus argutifolius* (Corsican Hellebore) were found in woodland on the north edge of the town, *Allium porrum* (Leek) from a roadside near Dulicht Bridge and on a roadside verge on the edge of Mosstodloch in (NJ35J) *Chionodoxa luciliae* (Boissier's Glory-of-the-Snow) was found well established.

The discovery of *Tofieldia pusilla* (Scottish Asphodel) on Craigellachie NNR (NH81) is only the second known site for this in VC 95 and also updates the record for the 10km square.

On a heap of soil by the ruins of Woodside Farm (NJ26) *Artemisia ludoviciana* (Western Mugwort) was found new for the county and as were the following species from the nearby Elgin Rubbish Tip- *Saponaria ocymoides* (Rock Soapwort), *Chrysanthemum coronarium* (Crown Daisy) and *Clarkia unguiculata* (Clarkia).

Request for information on JH Penson

I am attempting to obtain information on JH Penson who botanised in North America and Canada in the 1940s and then in the U K (mainly Scotland) from about 1955 to 1977. In his later years he appears to have lived in the Glasgow area. So far, I have been unable to trace any botanical obituary but have obtained some details from his notebooks which have recently come to light. If anyone has information regarding his background, achievements, life span, etc., I would be interested to hear. Thank you.

MICHAEL FOLEY, Faraday Building, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Lancaster. (Email: m.foley@lancaster.ac.uk)

Trouble with Cowbane (*Cicuta virosa*)

LYNNE FARRELL

During the winter I was contacted by the SNH Airlie office to ask whether I would help with a case of poisoning. This is not the first time that I have received a request of this kind. (Readers may remember 'Know your carrots' *BSBI News* 2001). A farmer near Balgavies Loch, Angus, had unfortunately lost three cows in late October 2004. Shona Hill, the Area Officer, and I suspected that the presence of Cowbane might have caused the problem. He grazed the SSSI by agreement with SNH and appreciated the early spring growth, which both the wet, marshy patches and the dry grassland on the raised areas provided. Two very sick cows were found lying on the upper slopes, and so the rest of the herd was moved to another field. During the move, one more heifer fell on the road and was removed by a passing JCB with shovel. This is obviously not an event that we would like to see repeated.

So in mid-March 2005 we visited the site. This was to see if we could identify the areas where the suspect Cowbane grew, and if a fence could be erected to prevent the cattle entering the wetter patches, while still allowing the use of eàrly and late season bite. It proved quite difficult at this early stage in the botanical year to find the plant. I eventually distinguished a rather bashed up stem and some dried leaves. There was a suggestion that I should taste it to make sure of my identification, as other Umbellifers were growing there, but I had faith in my judgement! We contacted Hugh Ingram and Barbara Hogarth, both of whom had recorded in the area before. They told us that *Cicuta* grew scattered around the Rescobie, Balgavies and Chapel Mires area in several wet places.

The *Flora of Angus* (Ingram & Noltie 1981) cites *Cicuta virosa* as growing in marshes and around loch-margins, local but plentiful, at Kinnordy Loch, Rescobie Loch, Balgavies Loch, Pools and Milldens, with an old record at Forfar Loch. Whilst visiting the Airlie office I found a Flora previously unknown to me- *Flora of Forfarshire*, William Gardiner 1848. I decided to look up what that volume had to say about Cowbane, which proved very illuminating, as it proves the older botanists knew just as much, if not more, than we do now.

'*Margins of the Lakes of Rescobie, Balgavies, Forfar,etc, generally growing in the water. Restenet also. This very poisonous plant is appropriately named Cowbane, and Mr G. Don relates that 'cattle, when allowed to browse by the sides of the lakes in the winter months, are sometimes deceived, by its smell being very weak at that season; and when once they have eaten it , it generally proves fatal in two or three hours. The late Mr Dickson of Cloak'sbridge lost three cows in one afternoon by this plant. When the summer is a little advanced, the odour of the plant warns the cattle, and then they carefully avoid it.' Were farmers acquainted with this and such like plants, and making them known to their herdboys, it might be much to their advantage.*'

Cowbane on the whole is an uncommon plant in Britain and instances of poisoning are rare, although the plant is extremely poisonous. The poison is an unsaturated higher alcohol, cicutoxin, and this is present in all parts of the plant, particularly in the yellow juice of the underground parts, and it is still active in the dried plant. Animals are most at risk when soil disturbance has exposed the underground parts of the plants. Professional help should be sought as quickly as possible to control convulsions and assist breathing. (Min. of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food 1998). This applies for both humans and animals. So, do take care when encountering this plant. And please don't forget to wash your hands carefully after finding it, especially after returning home to tea and biscuits.

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British Pteridological Society, Scotland

The British Pteridological Society was founded in 1891 and today continues as a focus for fern enthusiasts. It provides a wide range of information about ferns through its publications and other literature. It also organises formal talks, informal discussions, field meetings, garden visits, plant exchanges, a spore exchange scheme and fern book sales. The Society has a wide membership that includes gardeners, nurserymen and botanists, both amateur and professional. The Society's journals, *The Fern Gazette, Pteridologist* and *Bulletin,* are published annually. *The Fern Gazette* publishes matter chiefly of specialist interest on international pteridology, the *Pteridologist*, topics of more general appeal, and the *Bulletin,* Society business and meeting reports. Our website is http://www.eBPS.org.uk

The Scottish group arranges four or five meetings per year ranging from field trips in search of native ferns to visits to gardens and collections of exotic ferns. We welcome anyone interested in ferns and fern allies. BSBI members are very welcome to attend any of our meetings. Here is our programme for 2005:

Saturday, 4 June	A.M.	**Benmore Botanic Garden**, Dunoon
	P M.	**Puck's Glen**, nearby, (filmy ferns, etc.)
Saturday, 9 July		**Ben Lui**, near Tyndrum, (*Cystopteris montana, Woodsia alpina, Cryptogramma crispa,* etc.) We hope to get permission to take in a vehicle to avoid the long walk in.
Saturday, 23 July		**Loch Libo**, Renfrewshire. Survey of loch side and neighbourhood for *Dryopteris cristata.* This visit is dependent on access being granted by SWT.
Weekend, 24/25 Sept		**Arran.** Please note the new dates for this outing. There are 55 pteridophyte species, subspecies, and hybrids listed in the Arran Flora, and also a fine collection of exotic ferns at Brodick Castle Gardens.

If anyone would like to attend any of these meetings please let me know in plenty of time before each outing and I will send you details, directions, etc.

Frank McGavigan, 12 Glenbank Avenue, Lenzie, Glasgow G66 5AA. Telephone 0141 776 1019 or e-mail: frank@mcgavigan2.demon.co.uk

The Orkney MapMate Experience

ELAINE R BULLARD

I first started computerised recording in 1987, and since then have tried a number of databases including Recorder. Soon after MapMate first became available in the BSBI I got my free copy and installed it. MapMate was a huge improvement over these other recording packages, as it was so easy to learn and to use! However, my first year with MapMate was not without its problems – some related to MapMate and some to my computer setup. This experience rather discouraged other members of the Orkney Field Club from using MapMate, several of whom had also, by then, installed the programme. However, we persisted and overcame these teething troubles, and by the beginning of 2004, we were gaining both confidence and records. Orkney amateur naturalists have always co-operated with each other, our Local Authority, local NCC/SNH office and with our respective national specialist societies, and this mutual support was invaluable when learning and working with MapMate.

The Local Change project was not just a challenge for local botanists, but for all the local naturalists who helped record our tetrads as thoroughly as possible. Only one of our four tetrads was on the Mainland - of Orkney that is! The others were 'overseas' on the islands of Rousay, Sanday and Copinsay, with access to this latter island requiring a special boat hire. However even the Mainland square was not straightforward. It was hilly and had nesting Schedule 1 birds and an abundance of midges! By the end of 2003 everyone had had quite enough of Local Change, and once entered, our records were duly sent off using MapMate through the internet to the BSBI hub.

In 2004 we began to discover many exciting and rather hidden advantages of the program. Most of us joined the very helpful MapMate User Group and took advantage of its library of SQLs (database queries), and downloaded MapMate newsletters, updates and patches. Meanwhile our Local Biological Records Centre, although 'obliged' to use Recorder, got its own copy of MapMate. It could then receive all my validated vascular plant records, directly from me through the synchronisation process. We all hope that MapMate and Recorder will be able to 'speak to each other' some day, to allow data to be more easily interexchanged.

Although there is still a big backlog of historical (paper) VC111 records to be entered, we are now getting reasonably up-to-date with current records. On Orkney, four BSBI members are now regularly using, and networking through MapMate. We all have access to all the VC111 MapMate records, and this is useful as it allows any of us to spot errors in the database and in each other's records. We would advise MapMate users to explore the database, read all the 'Help' facilities, join the MapMate User Group and never accept they have nothing else to learn! For example, do learn how to set filters correctly (my biggest bête noir!) Nothing else can hurt a synchronisation partner more than badly set filters. On the subject of site names; there seems to be no way to stop site names proliferating, but the use of 'wildcards' in site names is an easy way to pull records together. Wildcards can also be used in taxon names but a special User Group SQL query is required. Do make use of the configurable F9 query which can browse specific data directly from Data Entry. Last but not least, always back up your records every time any are added, and the whole MapMate Directory at least once a month.

Striking a Balance

GILLIAN AC MACPHERSON

[The following is an extract from an essay written by a 14 year old school girl in 1970 —35 years ago. It has just surfaced in a box of old documents. As instanced by two of the articles in the current Newsletter, some of the comments remain remarkably relevant. Ed.]

Those who are responsible for keeping the verges trimmed wish to do so as economically as possible. It is much cheaper to send a lorry that will spray weed-killer, than to have the area scythed. However, it is much more pleasant to see flowering plants at the roadside rather than burnt edges. For example, in early spring the borders are a mass of white with Cow Parsley and Sweet Cicely. In addition, indiscriminate use of weed killer also kills off rare plants. In certain areas the local authority have agreed to limit its application in certain sites where special plants such as Few-flowered Leek grows, as in the border counties.

If the steel complex at Hunterston goes ahead, as well as spoiling the scenery, it may destroy the only site of Seaside Centaury in Ayrshire. However, it will help to ease the unemployment situation and boost the Scottish economy.

Selective weed killers have greatly reduced the number of cornfield weeds which compete with the crop for nutrients obtained from the soil. They are, therefore, of great benefit to the farmer, but make the fields less attractive due to the absence of bright plants such as Corncockle, Cornflower and Corn Poppy.

A part of Upper Teasdale was flooded recently to provide a reservoir for industry. Due to this, a site for many rare species such as Teasdale Violet and Teasdale Sandwort have been lost. £25,000 was raised by the public to fight the proposal, but they lost the battle. ICI, however, donated £100,000 to enable research to be carried out and I understand that some of the rarities have been re-located.

A Code of Conduct has been produced.
Plants are protected on such places as Ben Lawers, a mountain which houses rarities like Snow Gentian. It is a good example of an area where plants are preserved by the National Trust for Scotland for people to admire. The Nature Conservancy has combined with the National Trust in establishing an Information Centre. Visitors are encouraged, but are under strict instruction to take care and not damage the flora in any way and not to collect specimens.