

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF THE BRITISH ISLES

WELSH BULLETIN

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'Great Fen - sedge', *Cladium mariscus* del. H.M. Reynolds 1983

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HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1982

The fifth Quadrennial meeting and twentieth Annual General meeting of the B.S.B.I. Wales, was held at Glynllifon Hall near Caernarfon, Gwynedd on July 17th 1982.

On the Saturday morning, those members who had arrived early enjoyed a short field trip to Morfa Dinlle at the southern entrance to the Menai Strait. Many maritime species were seen and a fine stand of *Polygonum polystachyum* was completely naturalized in a ditch by the roadside.

The AGM proper started at 2.30 pm when the Chairman, Mr. G. Wynne, introduced the first speaker, Miss Ann Conolly. She gave a fascinating talk on the Flora of the Lleyn Peninsula, accompanied by an excellent series of slides (a précis of this talk appears elsewhere in this Bulletin). The AGM which followed was opened by the Chairman. After apologies for absence and the signing of the Minutes of the previous AGM, he said how much he had enjoyed his four years in office, which were now coming to an end. He drew attention to the fact that the Welsh membership stood at about 150, which compared favourably with the figure for Britain as a whole and was increasing slowly; he then thanked all the Committee members who had served with him over the years. The Secretary, Mr. R.G. Ellis, then gave his report on the previous year's activities. He mentioned that the Committee for Wales was now at full strength; Mr. T. Blackstock and Mr. T.G. Evans had both accepted an invitation to join. Mr. R. Meade, who had been the official N.C.C. observer on the Committee, had resigned and his role taken over by Mr. R.G. Woods, who was already serving on the Committee. He went on to thank the retiring Chairman, Mr. G. Wynne, on behalf of all members for the very valuable contribution he had made to the Society in Wales. During his four years as Chairman he was instrumental in getting the recent publicity campaign off the ground, which resulted in the recruitment of many new members. Being Welsh speaking he had also ensured that the campaign was conducted in both English and Welsh and that a Welsh language conservation poster was produced. A vote of thanks was proposed for Mr. Wynne and was carried by acclamation.

During the past year a number of topics had been discussed at meetings of the Committee for Wales, one of these involved the reintroduction of rare plants raised in gardens back into their original habitats. Serious doubts were expressed over the wisdom of this, as the introduced plants could contaminate any plants which had survived, unrecorded in that locality. One solution was for the reintroduction to be made in a similar habitat some 3-4 kilometres distant, to maintain genetic isolation.

The Secretary then drew attention to the fact that a long standing member of the Society and the vice-county recorder for Anglesey, Mr. R.H. Roberts of Bangor, had written a book on the Anglesey flora that had recently been published by the National Museum of Wales - *The Flowering Plants and Ferns of Anglesey*. Mr. Roberts was warmly congratulated on producing such an excellent work.

Statement of Current Account at 30 June, 1982

Brought forward	25.62	Production of Bulletin (Feb. 1982)	67.62
Cash for BSBI Treasurer	75.00		
Donation	4.00		
	<u>£104.62</u>		<u>£67.62</u>
Excess income over expenditure:		<u>£37.00</u>	

The Chairman thanked Mr. Pryce for the clear way in which he had portrayed our financial position. He also drew attention to the fact that more could be done by members to raise money for the Society. A Coffee Morning he had organized in Flint had raised £38.56p with very little effort and he urged other members to try their hand and organize some fund raising function in their area.

Election of Officers

The Hon. Secretary, Mr. R.G. Ellis, and the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. R.D. Pryce, were both nominated for re-election to their respective posts, and in the absence of other nominations were duly elected.

Committee Members: Mr. T. Blackstock and Mr. T.G. Evans had been co-opted to the Committee after the last AGM; they were now nominated for election and duly elected to serve for one year. Three other members, Mrs. M.E. Perry, Mr. S.B. Evans and Dr. Q.O.N. Kay retired from the Committee but were willing to stand for re-election. There being no other nominations they were duly elected to serve for a further period of two years. The retiring Chairman, Mr. G. Wynne, was eligible for election to the Committee for Wales and was duly elected to serve for two years.

Amendments to the Constitution

The following amendments to the Constitution were proposed and adopted.

1. Paragraph 4: The Officers
delete "Minutes Secretary" and substitute with "Treasurer"
2. Paragraph 5: Election of Officer
insert after "a later date" and before "The Secretary",
"The retiring Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman shall be eligible for immediate election to the Committee for Wales".
3. Paragraph 11: Finance
Following on from Proposal 1 delete "Secretary" and substitute "Treasurer".

The Chairman then reminded members that although the Committee for Wales put forward names of prospective members for election at the AGM, there was no reason why nominations could not be received from the floor and that it might be a very healthy thing if some nominations were to be received from outside the Committee in future years.

Accommodation is available at Caer Llan in 2-3 bedded rooms at approx. £9 per night, including meals. All B.S., B.I. members and their guests are welcome.

Further details can be obtained from the Secretary to the Committee for Wales, Mr. R.G. Ellis, Department of Botany, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF1 3NP. Please apply before June 1st 1983.

Nominations for membership to the Committee for Wales, or for the post of Hon. Secretary or Hon. Treasurer should be made in writing with the signature of the nominee, before the end of May, to the Hon. Secretary at the above address.

FIELD MEETINGS, 1983

Saturday 11th June. Caerwys, Flintshire (Clwyd).
Leader: Mrs. J.A. Green

Visits will be made to two contrasting sites, one a wetland area on limestone, the other an acid bog.

Please apply for details to Mr. R.G. Ellis, address above, before 13th May.

Sunday 19th June. Newborough Warren, Anglesey (Gwynedd).
Leader: Mr. N. Brown

This area is well known for its very rich flora and it is hoped that many of its specialities will be seen during the visit, particularly marsh-orchids.

Please apply for details to Mr. R.G. Ellis, address above, before 20th May.

Sunday 26th June. Nash Point, Glamorgan.
Leader: Mr. R.G. Ellis

The Glamorgan Heritage Coast is the home of many interesting plants and among those to be seen on this meeting will be *Matthiola incana*, *Cirsium tuberosum* and *Gastroidium ventricosum*.

Please apply for details to Mr. R.G. Ellis, address above, before 27th May.

Saturday 2nd July. Ysgolion Duon, Caernarfonshire (Gwynedd).
Leader: Mr. T. Blackstock

A fairly strenuous climb in the heart of Snowdonia to see some specialities of this area.

Please apply for details to Mr. R.G. Ellis, address above, before 11th June.

Sunday 10th July. (in conjunction with the B.S.B.I. Wales Annual General Meeting in Trelleck on Saturday 9th July). Lower Wye Valley, Monmouthshire (Gwent). Leader: Mr. T.G. Evans.

This area is famous for its native woodland and visits will be made to some of these and a dried out peat bog.

Please apply for details to Mr. R.G. Ellis, address above, before 19th June.

Sunday 31st July. Llyfnant Valley, N. Cardiganshire (Dyfed).
Leader: Mr. A.O. Chater

The purpose of the meeting is to examine the diverse and interesting flora of the base-rich rocky woods in this valley.

Please apply for details to Mr. R.G. Ellis, address above, before 1st July.

THE FLORA OF CARMARTHENSHIRE -
SOME ASPECTS OF THE FIRST YEAR'S RECORDING

The season started with the circulation of about thirty botanists and naturalists all having some connection with Carmarthenshire, whom it was thought might be willing to contribute to the new county tetrad recording project. No formal meetings were proposed, though it was thought likely that most participants would meet-up at some time during the year at B.S.B.I., Trust or Llanelli Naturalists field-meetings. Individual recorders were provided with the existing species-list, if any, for their home tetrad and asked to fill-in as many extra species as possible. In addition, blank cards were included for recording extra sites and tetrads, should recorders wish to go further afield. At the time of writing fifteen of those originally contacted have contributed records; some have been very prolific.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the B.S.B.I. meeting at the M.O.D.'s Proof and Experimental Establishment at Pendine on July 4th. Despite the inevitable rain and a ban on photography, the day was very enjoyable. The party split into four groups, each widely deployed to include as many tetrads as possible, led by at least one competent botanist and escorted by a member of M.O.D. staff to ensure that we did not venture anywhere out of bounds. The number of species recorded in each tetrad was very considerably increased by the end of the day, since restriction of access has severely limited botanical recording here in the past.

The largely undisturbed nature of the burrows was a notable feature with only moderate colonization, in parts, by *Hippophaë rhamnoides*, in contrast to Tywyn Burrows across the Tywy estuary. The superb richness of the plant communities stood out, especially in the wet, former saltmarsh areas, as did the diversity of the emergent species in the drainage ditches, which included *Hippuris vulgaris*, *Typha latifolia*, *Baldellia ranunculoides* and *Veronica catenata*. A very large dune-slack yielded one plant of *Liparis loeselii*, discovered quite by chance, growing amongst dense *Salix repens* and the moss *Acrocladium cuspidatum*. This was the first vice-county record for the species since 1971, despite repeated searching. Not far away another group found a stand of *Brachypodium pinnatum*, only known elsewhere in the county on Pembrey dunes. The party deployed to the Ginst Point area, at the eastern end of the range, turned up three very interesting records, viz. *Atriplex longipes*, *Salicornia pusilla* and *Hypochoeris glabra*, the former being a new county record, the latter new post-1930 records. In a more acid slack, close to the central part of the range, an extensive stand of *Cirsium dissectum* and its hybrid with *C. palustris*, *C. x forsteri*, was noted; this was considered rather unusual due to the normally base-rich nature of Carmarthenshire dune-systems. On the dry dune ridges at the western end of the range a few plants of *Thalictrum minus* were seen, only known elsewhere in the vice-county on base-rich mountain rocks, well inland.

Mention must also be made of the efforts of the Dyfed County Council's Woodland Survey Team, the members of which have surveyed about fifty sites in the Carmarthen area and let me have copies of their species lists, which have contributed greatly to many under-recorded tetrads.

Many useful records were made during Llanelli Naturalists' meetings at Allt Rhyd y Groes, Pembrey Burrows and Towyn Burrows, where a number of plants of *Parentucellia viscosa* were seen - this species seems to have done particularly well this year. The West Wales Naturalists' Trust meeting at Llanglydwen also helped fill some gaps on the map.

The year has produced a concentration of records from the south of the vice-county, largely due to the fact that the bulk of recorders lives in the south, so I must appeal to those involved to make a concerted effort next year and in succeeding years, to attempt to fill-in some of the many gaps in the north. But I must express my thanks to all participants for their sterling work in this first year and hope for a continuation of the enthusiasm they have shown for the future.

R.D. Pryce

Footnote

In the course of the last two years the existence of a further plant, said to have been once removed from the Great Orme and planted in the Happy Valley gardens, came to light. It appears that this plant has also been the subject of propagation experiments and the resultant three plants are in the possession of Aberconwy Borough Council. The history of these plants is currently under investigation and should they prove to be of Great Orme stock, then they will be a valuable addition to the current genetic pool.

John A. Davies

B.S.B.I. WELSH REGION FIELD MEETINGS, 1982

FENS OF THE LLEYN PENINSULA, 18TH JULY 1982

Two base-rich fens and a wet pasture with heathy patches in the vicinity of Edeyrn in the west Lleyrn peninsula were visited by some 30 members on Sunday 18th July. The common south of Edeyrn produced a fair quantity of *Genista anglica* in flower and in fruit, and *Oenanthe fistulosa* (both with less than half-a-dozen sites in Lleyrn). *Carex hostiana*, *C. binervis*, *C. pulicaris* and other sedges were seen, but no trace of the *Botrychium* once recorded from here.

The two fen sites were especially rich both in Orchids and in Cyperaceae. Apart from splendid *Epipactis palustris* at both places (a pale-flowered form was much admired), and *Gymnadenia conopsea* at one, the *Dactyloctenium* taxa were all but over. Some possible hybrids of *D. traunsteineri* with Heath Spotted Orchids, and perhaps *D. purpurella*, were discussed. In addition to the commoner sedges, well-grown *C. lepidocarpa* was in abundance, and we also found *C. lasiocarpa*, *C. dioica*, *C. rostrata*, *C. acutiformis*, *C. diandra* and *C. disticha*, as well as *Cladium mariscus* and *Eriophorum latifolium*. Two species of *Utricularia*, *Crepis paludosa* and *Ranunculus lingua* were amongst taxa seen which have only one or two localities in Lleyrn; and *Parnassia palustris*, which only occurs in fens and flushes towards the northern side of the peninsula.

In and around the farm at Edeyrn were a number of species which in this region are closely associated with old 'habitation' sites and appear to be relics of former 'herbal' usage: *Ballota nigra*, *Verbena officinalis*, *Artemisia absinthium*, *Chelidonium*, *Calamintha ascendens* and *Parietaria*; though perhaps some link with more 'calcareous' or drier soil is implied for some, for here, too, we saw one of the only two stands in west Lleyrn of *Knautia arvensis*; and the locally rare *Malva moschata* and *Reseda luteola*.

A. Conolly

their own humiliation, the ups and downs of all, the screams, the laughs - we became most uproariously merry. Grievously bemired of course we were: boots that had been lavender-coloured looked as if they had been dipped into the blacking bottle, the polishing being omitted; and hose of snowy radiance were encased in sable mud. But we had come out to botanize, and botanize we would; we were out for a day's pleasure, and we were not to be disconcerted by a little bog-mire"

Although over 120 years had elapsed since the visits by Babington, Gosse and their contemporaries, most of the ca. 30 wetland species they recorded were re-found by our 20th century party. *Carex disticha*, first recorded in 1853, was admired for its dominant stands on the mown areas of the marsh, and perhaps indicative of its estuarine origins. *Lysimachia vulgaris* and *Rumex hydrolapathum*, both recorded in 1848, were still abundant along the ditches and tall fen. In an area of more acid peat kept open by grazing horses, *Thelypteris palustris*, *Osmunda regalis* and a few bushes of *Myrica gale* were re-found. The latter had evidently declined since Gosse's time as he described the most fragrant Sweet-gale or Bog Myrtle as "growing in great profusion" and mentioned that "here in Wales they offer it as a token of kindly feeling to strangers". Although not in full flower, *Cyperus longus* was closely examined and photographed by the party. H.W. Pugsley had first found it at Penally in 1923. It has one other extant location in Pembrokeshire - at Orielton, where it may have been introduced to the lake. *Cyperus longus* was one of the first plants to be collected in Pembrokeshire. A specimen was taken from Whitesands Bay, St. Davids, in July 1773, but numerous searches have failed to re-find it despite precise locational details on the British Museum label.

In the wettest areas, amongst the species-rich *Phragmites* and *Molinia* stands of the fen, were Gosse's large *Carex paniculata* tussocks. Growing alongside were the smaller tussocks of *Carex elata*. This was not amongst the 6 sedges recorded in Victorian times, but was discovered by the leader early in 1982 and is only the second record for the Vice-county. A few flowering plants of *Baldellia ranunculoides* were found by Mr. and Mrs. Kitchen. It was the first record for the marsh since Babington's day. Two of his notable species that have yet to be re-discovered are *Cladium mariscus* and *Carex serotina*. It seems likely that the first-named is now extinct, whilst the latter may just have been overlooked.

During lunch, the appearance of riflemen was followed by gunfire on the Ministry of Defence Small Arms Range. The marsh forms an integral part of this Range, and there is no doubt that the survival of this species-rich fen in such a popular tourist area as Tenby owes all to the presence of the military.

After refreshments, the party avoided the small arms fire and set off for the limestone sea-cliff of Giltar Head. A detour en route took in the site of *Gentianella uliginosa*, where much debate and reference to Clapham, Tutin and Warburg preceded the identification of *G. uliginosa*, owing to the confusion caused by the presence of apparent intermediates with

