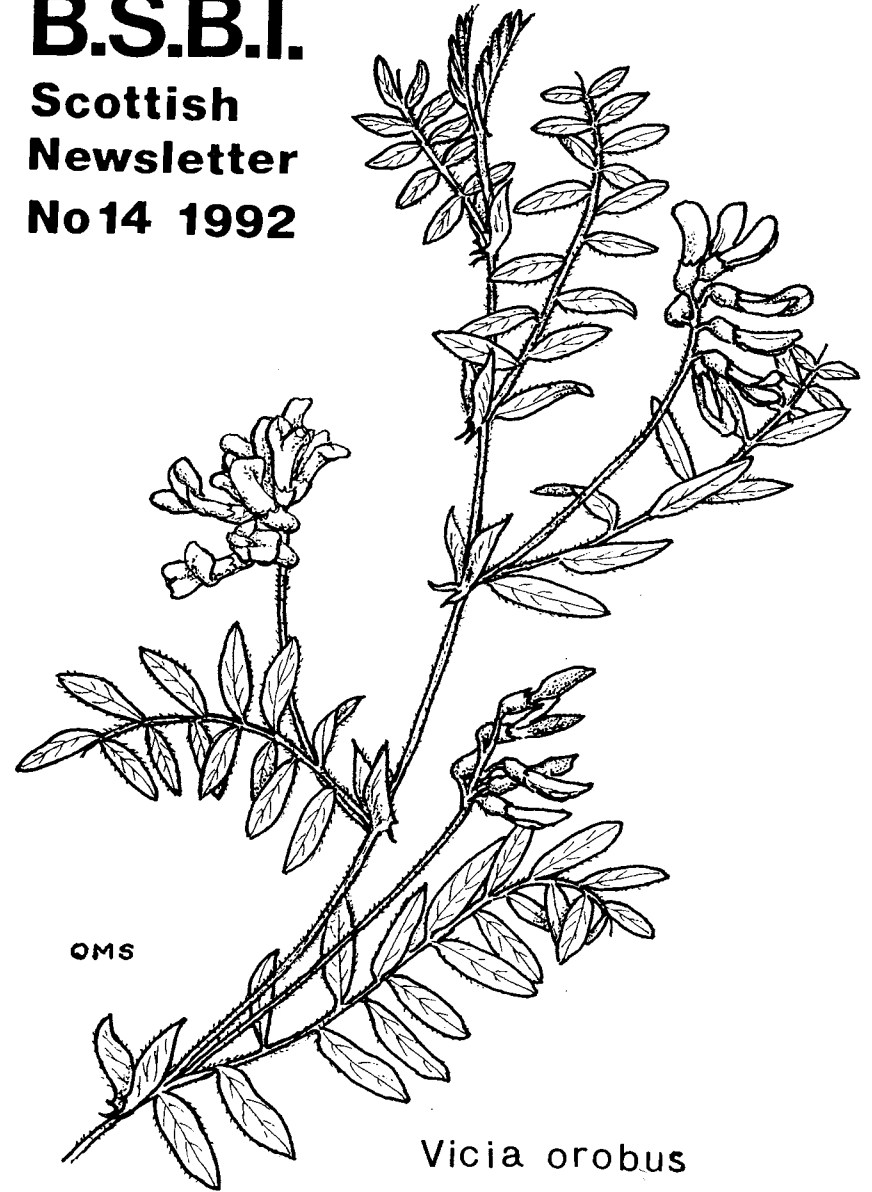


B.S.B.I.
Scottish
Newsletter
No 14 1992



Vicia orobus

BSBI SCOTTISH NEWSLETTER

Number 14

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EDITORIAL

The Scottish Newsletter is sent without cost to members in Scotland, but BSBI members from furth of Scotland are required to pay postage if they wish to receive the issues. The deposit lodged by most subscribers, at the launch of the publication in 1979, has been used up in the past two years and we are pleased that all but one have renewed their subscription.

We appreciate that most Recorders will be working steadily in their vice-counties and fulfilling the main function of continually updating records. The national survey underway at the present time is the Scarce Plants Project. In respect of this we were disappointed to learn in March 1992, that although the first list was sent out in May 1991, no less than 14 Scottish Recorders had not, by that time, made any returns. As the project has to be completed within a two-year timescale, we encourage all recorders to respond promptly during the remainder of the project.

Complimentary comments were received regarding the improved clarity of the script and of the semi-hard cover of last year's issue. We are grateful to Nan Macpherson and Jackie Muscott respectively for these improvements, and as ever, to Olga Stewart for the cover illustration, on this occasion depicting *Vicia orobus*, one of the species being surveyed in the Scarce Plants Project.

The Editors

Peter Macpherson
15 Lubnaig Road
Newlands
Glasgow G43 2RY

Allan McG Stirling
17 Austen Road
Jordanhill
Glasgow G13 1SJ

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

RODERICK CORNER

As your new Chairman I would like to thank Henry Noltie for his services to the committee and in particular, as Chairman over the past two years. I think I must be especially fortunate in having a secretary who is the national President of the BSBI.

I have always been aware that botany and conservation are inseparable but never more than to-day. Habitat destruction is carried out quickly and often unthinkingly. If you are aware of any local threats to particularly rich and well-loved sites please let any member of this committee know. Please do it yourself and don't wait for someone else to report actual or potential harmful activities.

We are now into the second and final year of the Scarce Plants Project. If you feel you can help the vice-county recorders by following up old records and doing population counts then this is your chance. Such help would be very welcome.

Moves are afoot to start recording for a new *Atlas of the British Flora*. We will keep you informed on this important topic. It will mean a lot of hard work but should be immensely stimulating and rewarding. Some of us will remember recording for the first *Atlas* and how it improved our field botany.

The possible purchase of the Mar Lodge Estate by a consortium of conservation bodies with government support has still to be agreed. It is being actively supported by the Society. I hope that there will be a successful outcome to report on at a later date.

Finally there are the Summer Field Meetings covering a wide range of habitat. I would ask you to support them. Why not have an Orkney holiday this year! Have a good summer.

**ENGLISH NAMES IN THE NEW
BRITISH FLORA**

DAVID WELCH

In previous national floras there were often two or even three English names for a species, reflecting the diversity of usage around Britain. The *New Flora of the British Isles*, published in late 1991, has many commendable features, but unfortunately Clive Stace has followed a policy of giving only a single English name for each species, omitting Scottish alternatives.

The reasoning for this change would appear to be a desire to increase the number of people interested in plants and using floras; Stace believes that English names are easier for the wider public than Latin Names. But it seems to me that people can only be deterred when they use the index and find absent names such as Blaeberry, Gean, Gowan and Whin. Or worse still, they are led to the wrong description, as in the case of Cranberry.

The principle of having a single English name for plant species appears to have been first adopted by Dony, Rob and Perring in *English Names of Wild Flowers*, 1974. The ideal of standardisation may succeed in small homogenous countries but will surely fail when it is meant to cover the whole of the British Isles, especially in times of strongly-felt nationalism; people's speech will not be changed by directive from above.

Dony *et al's* scheme of nomenclature has other weaknesses. It is based on the idea that English names should be binomial. ie that there should be English names for the genera qualified by English descriptive names for the species. Also each English name for a genus should apply only to one genus. So chickweed cannot be used for both *Cerastium* and *Stellaria*; the solution is to call the former mouse-ear. A logical consequence would be that the English names change when genera are merged or split. A further problem concerns English names with three elements e.g. Early Purple Orchid. They have to be

binomial, so we have ungrammatical concoctions like Early-purple Orchid (is it purple at first?) and Brackish Water-crowfoot (isn't the water brackish, rather than the water-crowfoot?)

I therefore urge my fellow botanists to stick to familiar English nomenclature as used in Clapham, Tutin and Moore, 1987, or by Mary McC. Webster's admirable *Flora of Moray, Nairn and East Inverness*, 1976. Names need conserving as well as plants.

I can't remember when I last missed attending a Scottish Exhibition Meeting, but it must be more than twenty years ago. Regretfully, due to hospitalisation I had to forego the meeting last year, and I take this opportunity to say how much I appreciated receiving the "get well" card which was signed by so many friends at the meeting.

Allan Stirling.

Richard Pankhurst has moved to the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh EH3 5LR. He has been appointed to the post of Project Leader, Taxonomic Computing and Software Development.

The *Flora of the Outer Hebrides* by RJ Pankhurst & JM Mullin was published without an index. An index is now available from RJP. Please send an SAE of dimensions at least 7" x 10".

**THE SCOTTISH EXHIBITION MEETING
2ND NOVEMBER 1991**

J MUSCOTT

The 1991 Meeting was held at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, by kind permission of the Regius Keeper, Dr Ingram.

There was the usual wide variety of exhibits, including plant material, photographs and paintings. Vice-county records included the re-discovery of *Arctostaphylos alpinus* in Skye after a gap of nearly 100 years; and a possible new record for Scotland, *Fumaria vaillantii* found in Dundee Docks.

There were displays from Plantlife, the Scottish Field Studies Association, the National Trust for Scotland (Restoration of Montane Willow on Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve), Glasgow Museum and Art Gallery (Orchids in Art) and the Scarce Plants Project; Natural History books for sale from the Perrings; and photographs of The Queen Mother opening the Nature Reserve at Duchie's Piece and of the President, Secretary and other officials of the Botanical Society of the British Isles, who attended the ceremony.

Scottish Recorders Meeting

The Scottish Vice-county Recorders met at 11.30 am. There was a brief report on the Scarce Plant Project, which is now half way through and progressing satisfactorily. All Scottish botanists are requested to check their notebooks for the last few years, and let the Vice-county Recorder, or Alison Stewart at the Biological Records Centre, Monkswood, know of any rare or scarce plant records* they have not already passed on.

Recorders were introduced to Philip Lusby who has recently moved to the Royal Botanic Garden to start work on the Conservation of Rare Plants in Scotland. The Project is funded for two years in the first instance, and priority will be given to assessing the status of all Scottish Red Data Book species.

It was reported that publication of the results of the 1987-88 Monitoring Scheme was now under way and that all Recorders should have received a copy of the report together with the maps and tables. Copies will be available for sale to other members. Three articles have been submitted for publication in *Watsonia* (two papers now withdrawn as the Joint Nature Conservancy Council are to publish the Report ed).

The members were told that the options for a new *Atlas of British Flora* had been discussed at the National Recorders meeting in September, but that there had been no consensus about the need for a re-survey, nor had cut-off dates been finalised. A decision will be made early in the New Year.

AGM of the BSBI Scottish Section

This meeting was held at 2.30 pm and was well attended.

It was reported that the River Purification Board had been contacted over the herbicide in the River Tweed, and there had been no further problems. Apparently herbicide use occurs from time to time, and members should keep an eye on their local waterways.

The 1991 Scottish Field Meetings though slightly fewer than usual, had been well attended, particularly the trip to Jura.

Advance notice was given of the six meetings planned for 1992, the highlight being a visit to Caithness in August. This will include afternoon tea with The Queen Mother, Patron of the BSBI, at the Castle of Mey. This Field Meeting will be followed by another, just across the sea, in Orkney.

Business ended with the election of three new committee members, Duncan Donald, formerly of the Chelsea Physic Garden, now working for the National Trust for Scotland, Gordon Rothero from the Benmore Outdoor Centre, and Mark Watson from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

The Chairman thanked the retiring committee members, Jackie Muscott and Allan Stirling for their contribution to the work of the committee, and the Secretary expressed, on behalf of the meeting, appreciation of the work carried out by the retiring Chairman, Henry Noltie.

It should be noted that the Committee's long-term Secretary, Peter Macpherson, now elevated to President of the national body, still finds time to carry on his Scottish duties, including joint editorship of the Scottish Newsletter. The other joint editor, Allan Stirling, was in hospital at the time of the meeting, and hopes were expressed for his speedy recovery.

There followed a brief meeting of the BSBI Committee for Scotland during which the afternoon's speaker Dr Rod Corner was elected Chairman.

Lecture: Botany in the Borders

Dr Corner gave a fascinating account of some of the rare and interesting plants to be found in Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire. The first problem he faced when assuming Recordship of these vice-counties was that of unravelling some particularly complicated and obscure boundaries.

(Boundaries of course are a traditional Border problem!)

However all the efforts seem to have been well worth while, as Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire contain many species at their northern extremity, or else at their only inland or upland sites.

The day concluded with a buffet supper at the nearby Marina Hotel. Then back to the RBG for members' slides, which included plants from Norway and the Foroes as well as new or interesting records for Scotland.

*See BSBI News No 57, April 1991, p17 for an article about the Scarce Plants Project, notes of whom to contact and a list of Scarce Plants.

List of Exhibits

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|
| M E Braithwaite | | Bog Pimpernel <i>Anagallis tenella</i> in the Lammermuirs.
New Zealand Bittercress <i>Cardamine uniflora</i> in Scotland |
| M Briggs |) | H.M. Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother at Duchie's Piece |
| P Macpherson |) | |
| J K Butler | | Caithness and Sutherland Plants |
| R W M Corner | | Plants from Roxburghshire
<i>Carex vaginata</i> from Morvern |
| I Crawford |) | <i>Cerastium tetrandrum</i> var <i>pusillum</i> |
| T Rich |) | on Uist |
| G Halliday |) | <i>Fumaria vaillantii</i> in Dundee Docks - new to Scotland? |
| J Edelsten | | <i>Juncus conglomeratus</i> var <i>subuliflorus</i> |

I M & P A Evans	Flora of Assynt
G Halliday	Noteworthy Plants from Cumbria
A Lavery	Scottish Field Studies Association Courses 1992
M Little	Viviparous Clovers
D McCosh	Notable New Hawkweed Records
D K Mardon	Restoration of Montane Willow on Ben Lawers N N R
C W Murray	<i>Arctostaphylos alpinus</i> in Skye
F & M Perring	Floras and Natural History Books for sale
C D Preston) J M Croft)	<i>Ranunculus x kelchoensis</i> rediscovered
N Taylor	200 years of Botany on Moncrieffe Hill
M M Scott	What is Plantlife up to ?
A A Slack	<i>Corynephorus canescens</i> in W. Scotland
A Stewart) G Preston)	The Scarce Plants Project
O M Stewart	Ferns from Newlaw Moss Plants from Kirkcudbrightshire Flower Paintings
A Walker) K Watson)	Orchids in Art
D Welch	Mystery Bramble from Aberdeen
J Woods	Artists' Willow

List of Slides

R Corner	Scottish Botany: Graden, Strontian and Morven
H A Lang	Botany on Scottish Islands from Jura to St Kilda
Rev K McKay	Caenlochan, Glen Clova and Glen Lyon in 1990
C W Murray	The re-discovery of <i>Arctostaphylos alpinus</i> in Skye
J Muscott	Plants from the Lothians and the Highlands
H Salzen	Rare Scottish Alpines seen in Norway
A Silverside	Plants on the Faroes (including the odd Eyebright)
A A Slack	New discoveries and some successful plant hunts in Western Scotland.

IF ONLY

OLGA STEWART

Last year I was approached by a local landlord to come and speak to the "Tree Growers Association" at their meeting at New Abbey, VC 73, to tell them (and him) what plants he had growing on his newly afforested hill. This article is a series of "IF ONLYs".

I knew already that there had been a nice marshy area near the main road, where sedges and *Hypericum elodes* grew, and I also knew that about five years ago the area

had been drained and had been planted with Sitka, but the *Hypericum* was still growing in the ditch parallel with the road. If only I had at that time explored further; but the lower part of the hill was Heather and Bog Myrtle, difficult to walk through and did not look very promising.

The owner had planned his planting of Sitka spruce, Larch and a percentage of hardwoods carefully with a view to conservation for birds, leaving an open grassy area - a meadow - and also the birch and alder by the burn that runs through the property. But if only he had approached me about the flora *before* he planted. When I went to record the area for him, the first plant of interest was *Orchis macula*, an uncommon plant in the east of the county. There was a nice colony in a grassy area, which must have been wooded at some time in the past, for through the grass there were a lot of *Anemone nemorosa*, *Mercurialis perennis*, *Lathyrus montanus* and *Hyacinthoides non scripta*. Below this was a swathe of *Genista tinctoria* and *Helianthemum nummularium* but Sitka spruce had been planted throughout this area, though the owner now promised to move two Sitka saplings away from the *Early-purple Orchids*. I was shown a dew pond with a damp trickle flowing below it. By the pond was a plant of *Viola canina*, and by the burn below was *Agrimonia eupatoria*, *Phegopteris connectilis* and another colony of *Orchis mascula*, but sadly the area was again surrounded by Sitka spruce.

If only those people, who are about to plant new areas, would get prior advice from Scottish Natural Heritage or some botanist. In this case, the meadow could have been where the orchids, rockroses and Dyer's Greenwood grew, instead of the uninteresting botanical area that had been chosen. The dew pond could have had hardwoods and birch in its vicinity, instead of more conifers, If only !

CORYNEPHORUS CANESCENS (L.) BEAUV. IN SCOTLAND

JOHN TRIST

Beeby (1897) in his report on Townsend's collection of *Corynephorus canescens* at Arisaig also gives an earlier account of it in Ayrshire. The date may be 1837 but his summary of the information is chaotic and of no value. In the third edition of the *Atlas of the British Flora*(1982), *C. canescens* in Scotland has two post-1930 dots and one pre-1930 on the Moray coast and a saltire denoting an introduction at Arisaig, W. Inverness-shire.

The Moray coast sites.

Chater (1933) records that the Rev. G Birnie informed him that he had seen "a few plants of *C. canescens* among Canary Grass and other aliens, at Kingston on Spey, and a solitary plant, on the west side of Lossiemouth c. 1900" (VC 95) Chater adds "another instance of a casual introduction at a port".

Chater also reported that he had seen *C. canescens* in 1929 in "great abundance over extensive tracts of sand and shingle to the east of Lossiemouth...associated with *Calluna*, *Festuca rubra* and many lichens... it extends over many square miles and its density in the sand lows is 6-10 plants per square yard". A specimen was collected by Chater, "dunes on the east side of Lossiemouth, 1932, BM and in August 1933, G Birnie reported plants "on sandy waste near The Hillocks, Lossiemouth, (38/24.69), where it is well established" (Burgess 1935). JE Lousley collected at Lossiemouth 1938, K. No further records appeared during the war years but soon after, A Melderis collected at Lossiemouth in 1953, BM, which he recorded as "abundant". In 1955 Webster (1978) records it as "long established and still spreading on sandy heath south of Lossiemouth". Sheets were distributed to ABD, CGE, E and K. Webster lodged another sheet in CGE in 1961. In view of proposed development planning in 1974, M McCallum Webster and R Richter transplanted three plants of *C. canescens* to dunes

on Lossiemouth golf course and three plants to gravel flats west of Kingston.

John Edelston informed the writer in 1991 that the area west of Kingston is now a Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve and to date no plant of *Corynephorus canescens* has been recovered.

Site near Arisaig

The first record of *C. canescens* in W Inverness-shire (VC 97) is a specimen in the Druce herbarium., "sand dunes by the sea between Morar River and Arisaig, Westernness, F Townsend, July 1895", duplicates are in CGE, E and K.

Beeby (1897) leaves an account of the introduction of *Corynephorus canescens* at Arisaig and records, "Townsend informs me that the grass occurs in plenty on the sand hills". Referring to its status Beeby poses "the question of nativity was a matter of doubt until Townsend finally ascertained that it had been sown by Mr Eneas R Macdonell of Morar." Macdonell in litt 31 May 1896 to Townsend said "the fact of discovering the plant at Toigal has recalled facts to my memory which leave no doubt on my mind that the *Weingaertneria* (*Corynephorus*) is not indigenous but was introduced direct here and not by accidental admixture". It is Beeby who said that it had been introduced by Macdonell and who also records "that *Elymus* and other grasses had several times been sown on the sands about Arisaig". So *Corynephorus canescens* seed and plants could have been included on these occasions. Macdonell confirms the introduction was not an accident but did not admit his personal involvement. There appears no positive evidence to indict Macdonell.

On July 24th 1991, Alfred Slack, Elizabeth Norman and John Trist drove to Morar and walked down the sand banks to the small settlement of Toigal by the River Morar in Westernness VC 97. We were to survey intensively the "white sands of Morar" in 17/67.92 which stretches from Kinsadel to the mouth of the R. Morar, to re-find *C. canescens* which was last reported in this square in 1895.

The low dunes structure is a highly mobile loose white sand with little vegetation of which *Ammophila arenaria* is the main constituent and more or less confined to the crests. Following about half an hour's search, a single plant of *C. canescens* was found on a steep sided dune. It had 12 culms of which only three had survived the rabbits. This solitary plant was growing with one plant each of *Carex arenaria*, *Aira praecox*, and *Rumex acetosella* all within ten paces of a small dune crested with *Calluna vulgaris*. In spite of further local searches no other plants of *Corynephorus* were found. This single plant of *Corynephorus* represented the remainder of a once thriving colony. A small vegetative shoot was taken as a voucher and has been placed in the Royal Botanic Garden herbarium Edinburgh.

A Recent Discovery

A new colony of *C. canescens* was found in "short sandy turf by the estuary" at Hedderwick, near Dunbar, East Lothian VC 82 by the late Mrs Anna Younger in July 1986.

Acknowledgements

I thank John Edelsten and Alfred Slack for drawing my attention to references of *C. canescens* in Scotland.

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HORDEUM MURINUM IN THE GLASGOW AREA

P MACPHERSON

Although *Hordeum murinum* ssp *murinum* is a native weed in England, with the exception of the north west, it is rare in Scotland and Perring and Walters (1962) give only one record (south Ayrshire VC 75) for the whole of the West of Scotland.

Grierson (1931) wrote that although not native in the West of Scotland it had occurred several times in the district since 1919 and seemed to be established at one spot at Robroyston. Silverside (1978) reported that plants looked established on waste ground by Phoenix Sawmills, Kyle Street, Glasgow, but in a recent personal communication stated that the site had now been built over. He had also seen a single clump, probably casual on the banks of the canal by the Kilbowie Road culvert, Clydebank in 1978. It was also noted on waste ground at Dalmuir by A Mc G Stirling in 1980.

In 1987 I found two tall, thin plants at Kingston, confirmed to be an unusual form, by PJO Trist and in 1990 abundant similar type plants at an old industrial site at Rutherglen. Over 50 characteristic plants occurred in 1991 on lawns, stony banks and waste ground at the Southern General Hospital.

Ssp *leporinum* is a native of the Mediterranean region. Its occurrences in Britain are usually of a casual nature, but occasionally it has persisted for some time. Abundant plants were seen in 1990 intermingled with the ssp *murinum* at Rutherglen (det CA Stace). Both sub-species appeared again in quantity at the site in 1991.

With the exception of the Clydebank and Dalmuir (VC 99) sites, all the above definitive records are from Lanarkshire, VC 77.

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ONION COUCH REQUEST

ELAINE R BULLARD

Swine or Swiney Beads are so well-known in Orkney that until I read the request for information on Onion Couch, in the last issue of the Scottish Newsletter (1991 p 24), it never occurred to me that this was un-recorded or was of any distributal importance.

With changes in farming practice - barley and silage instead of oats, neeps and tatties - they are now probably confined to uncultivated places. Plenty of elderly people can remember when they were such a serious pest that one farmer would not visit another if there was any danger of him carrying home the "beads" on the soles of his boots, and they recount the many back-breaking hours spent in collecting them from fields before a crop could be sown.

"Paddy Grass" is another name, a "paddy" being a pig and in one island here it is said that an Irish man (it would be said !) actually planted them on his land to feed his pigs. I have a strong suspicion that they are a food of the Orkney Vole, *Microtus arvalis*. Modern records seem to be more from sandy places than elsewhere but this may be because they pull up easily with the culm in such soils but tend to break off in clay. Generally the beads are about the size, shape and colour of a small hazel nut although in the variegated cv *Arrhenatherum elatius bulbosum* 'Variegatum' (origin unknown?) they are more like strings of large pearls.

I am sure the great "HHJ" must have included specimens in his "Orkney Collection" at the RBG.

Last summer I was fortunate enough to get a job as a Summer Ranger at the Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve, and found myself working at the Lairig Innein enclosure described by David Mardon in the 1991 Newsletter. My main work was to survey the vegetation in the enclosure, a process which will be repeated every few years. For, although the primary aim is the restoration of montane willows and associated plants, it is important to monitor the effect of enclosure on the vegetation as a whole. It is known that sheep grazing encourages the spread of *Nardus stricta*, (Mat Grass), which the sheep dislike, and which is now the dominant vegetation in the area. But it is not known whether *Nardus* will reduce when sheep are removed, or whether once established it will maintain (or even increase) its present level. Neither do we know which alpenes are favoured by grazing, and which will suffer in the long or short term from the increased sward height. For although it is too early to identify other trends, there is no doubt that the grass is now a lot longer on the inside of the fence!

The area was first surveyed in 1988 before the fence was erected, and a number of fixed 1 m square quadrats were set up for detailed long-term study. The majority were placed at random (in the statistical sense) to sample the vegetation in the enclosures as a whole, while a few "special quadrats" were placed in positions where more rapid change might be expected.

Mine was the first re-survey, and problem number one was to find the quadrats. The quadrat posts were pretty conspicuous in the photographs of 1988, when they were new and the grass was short, but now they had weathered to an inconspicuous grey, and some were completely buried in tussocks of long grass and Bilberry. One "invisible" quadrat was on the route through the enclosure adopted by hillwalkers, who had to be diverted, since we were not in the business of monitoring the effect of trampling.

Some posts had been damaged by heavy snow during the winter of 1990-91, which had caused landslips on the steep western slopes, and these had to be replaced. The western fence was also badly damaged and had to be repaired professionally, a job which took two men the best part of a fortnight. Setting up these enclosures involves considerable commitment of both time and money for years to come.

But what of the present? As already mentioned it is too early to identify any but short term and possibly temporary developments, but some of these are quite interesting. Rarely for instance have I seen so many splendid specimens of *Carex binervis* (Green-ribbed Sedge), not to mention the clumps of giant (foot-high) *Epilobium alsinifolium* (Chickweed Willowherb). At the Scottish Exhibition Meeting Alan Silverside revealed he had seen even larger specimens of the Willowherb in the Faroes - so perhaps this is nearer its 'normal' potential.

Some of the most conspicuous of the plants noted in 1991 did not even figure in the 1988 list - plants like *Cardamine pratense* (Lady's Smock), common in early June at the southern end of the enclosure, and *Viola lutea* (Mountain Pansy), appearing rather later in striking purple patches around the main cliffs. Both must have been present before the fence went up but were prevented from flowering by the grazing.

A number of woodland plants were present - a good deal of *Anemone nemorosa* (Wood Anemone) and small amounts of *Luzula sylvatica* (Great Woodrush), *L. pilosa* (Hairy Woodrush), *Geranium sylvaticum* (Wood Cranesbill), and most surprising of all *Ranunculus auricomus* (Wood Goldilocks). As for the willows, there were three species hanging on (literally) in the enclosure: a single plant of *Salix arbuscula* (Mountain Willow), and two of *S. lapponum* (Downy Willow), all three plants female and some distance from the nearest males, plus a tiny colony of *S. myrsinifolia* (Dark-leaved Willow). As expected neither of the first two species showed any sign of setting seed, but a few seedlings of *S.*

myrsinifolia had already managed to establish themselves - and so had seedlings of *Betula pendula* (Downy Birch) and *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan), all of which shows the potential for recovery of scrub vegetation in this type of habitat.

It was clear however that neither of the two rarer willows was likely to regenerate naturally, so there was a grand willow-planting session while I was there. About a thousand seedlings were planted at Lairig Innein, and a rather smaller number in the new enclosure by the Edramucky Burn. All the plants belonged to the three species mentioned above, and all were grown from local seed, some of the *Salix myrsinifolia* seed having been collected from the Lairig Innein population the previous summer.

All the Rangers plus a number of volunteers took part in the planting which made it something of a social occasion as well as hard work. Since I was generally working alone it made a pleasant change, as did helping with one or two of the Guided Walks, and escorting the BSBI President to look at some rarities. I also greatly appreciated being taken on a *Sagina nivalis* (Snow Pearlwort) monitoring expedition, as I had never managed to find that plant for myself (and probably won't again given the obscuring cloud and mist that day).

Generally speaking the weather was pretty perverse; cold and wet until the monitoring was safely over, dry and sunny when the time came for Report writing.

Nevertheless it was a summer to remember, and thoroughly to be recommended to anyone wishing to get themselves fit!

Mardon, DK (1991). BSBI Scottish Newsletter, No 13, pp 5 - 7.

SCARCE PLANT PROJECT SURVEY IN KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE

OLGA STEWART

Of the list of scarce plants recently sent out by Monkswood we have 60 in Kirkcudbrightshire, or at least we had. *Rhynchospora fusca*, for instance, is now considered extinct in the one place that it grew in Rascarrel Moss, as the area is now covered by mature conifers. 20 of that total grow only in one or two sites and are rare. The problem for a current recorder is to consider which plants one has to re-search for. Some, I consider, were casual in the first place, and I would be lucky to re-find them: others are likely to be still there, but to get to them would mean a long walk, such as *Orthilia secunda*. Some of the more common have well-recorded populations, but they may have further records that haven't been seen recently.

There are several coastal plants among the scarce species. Some have healthy populations like both *Zosteras* which cover the mud in Auchencairn bay; while at the head of the bay is another plant on the list, *Limonium humile*, at its northern limit. When in flower it is a marvellous sight, as it is also in other smaller colonies further along the coast. *Crambe maritima*, I think at the moment is on the increase, and it can be found in most of the coastal squares. There are some other old records I consider among the casuals - *Euphorbia paralias* has been recorded only twice, the first time in 1964 at Mullock Bay Dundrennan, and the second at Southwick merse in 1979, but have not been seen there since. *Mertensia maritima* we hoped would become established when it was first seen this century in 1985. It was still growing in two sites in 1990, but there was no sign of either plant in 1991. The storms of the previous winter may have washed the plants and seeds further along the coast, but as they were on the army range near Dundrennan, those coastal areas are not often visited. *Polygonum raii* can usually be found where it has been previously recorded, but seldom in the exact spot where it was seen the year before, which makes it

difficult to give population estimates. Brighthouse bay has our single site for *Linum perenne* ssp. *anglicum* and although I have seen signs that people have tried to dig it up we have a healthy population. A visit needs to be made at the right time of year to where I found *Atriplex praecox* in 1977, and any visits since have only produced immature specimens. *Atriplex longipes*, on the other hand, is still found at the site where Dr Pierre Tascherau recorded it in 1975, despite the Creetown bypass being built right across the merseland where it grew. Our site for *Minuartia verna* is an unusual one. It grows on scree on a shore cliff at Douglas Hall and, despite sea spray, has survived there since 1835. Last year it had increased to 35 plants.

Away from the coast, the other main centre for our scarce species is around Loch Ken. With the management of the dams built for the Electricity Board and the resulting variation in water levels, the plants growing in and around the shore flourish. The population of *Pilularia globulifera* must be some of the largest in the British Isles. *Elatine hexandra* and *Subularia aquatica* grow well there and *Limosella aquatica*, a new addition to the county list, was found there in several places in 1988. In the marshy ground around the loch *Carex aquatalis* and *Polygonum minus* grow in abundance. A fairly common plant in the county is *Meum athamanticum* and it has several stations around Loch Ken. At one of the best it grows on a promontary with *Vicia orobus* where there are over a hundred plants of both intermingled together - a magnificent sight.

Though many of the 60 scarce species have up-to-date records, there are plenty of sites that were found in the 1970s and have not been visited since, and one does not know if the plants are still there, so anybody visiting Kirkcudbrightshire this summer who would like to help. please get in touch.

Survey of the flowering plants and ferns of Assynt

1. Area to be surveyed

The parish of Assynt is situated in the south-western corner of Sutherland. It is one of five large parishes which constitute VC 108, West Sutherland. It ranges in altitude from sea-level, along its extensive western and northern coastline, to 3234 feet at the summit of Conival, which is part of the Ben More Assynt massif on its eastern boundary. The underlying rocks include Lewisian gneiss, Torridonian sandstone, Cambrian quartzite and limestone.

The population is sparse and concentrated in small settlements scattered around the coast, the largest of which is Lochinver.

The plant communities of Assynt appear to represent, in microcosm, most of those found in West Sutherland, with, as a special feature, small but significant areas of deciduous woodland along the south side of Eddrachillis Bay and inland from Achmelvich.

2. Reasons for survey

Prior to retirement we were professional naturalists and were actively involved in the preparation of the *Flora of Leicestershire* published in 1988. We have been visiting Assynt on holiday for over ten years and are now living at Nedd. After several years "botanical browsing", we were looking for something more challenging, and after consultation with Dr JA Rogers, the VC Recorder we started, in 1988, a tetrad survey of the flora of Assynt.

The choice of the tetrad as a survey unit perhaps requires some justification in the context of the Scottish Highlands. The discipline of recording at this level of detail has proved very productive elsewhere in Britain and it is one with which we are familiar, albeit in the context of lowland England. Assynt is 185 square miles in area and

includes the whole or part of 164 tetrads, although some of our single site for *Linum perenne* ssp. *anglicum* and these contain only small offshore islands or are otherwise rather inaccessible. The parish was considered to be the largest area with an acknowledged geographical and historical identity that it was practicable to survey in this way, given the available resources of manpower and time.

However it was also hoped that, in view of the size, location and varied character of Assynt, tetrad recording might yield records of more than parochial significance. This was borne out by the discovery, in 1991, of Chaffweed, *Anagallis minima*. in 11 sites around the coast of Assynt, appreciably extending the known range of the species on the Scottish mainland.

3. Existing information.

The more obviously interesting or accessible parts of Assynt have been visited by botanists for many decades, especially its coast, mountains and the outcrops of Durness limestone at Inchnadamph, Elphin and Knockan. Existing information is summarised in *John Anthony's Flora of Sutherland* (Kenworthy 1976) and in *An introduction to the flowering plants and ferns of Lochbroom and Assynt* (Scouller 1988). However many of the records on the Flora are now rather old and, as Kenworthy suggested in his Editorial Note, some of these 'may be confirmed and extended in the light of more extensive surveys especially in the west of the county'. Some such survey work has been carried out by the Nature Conservancy Council and it is hoped that records from this work will complement the results of the tetrad survey.

4. Method of working.

A common species recording sheet has been devised, based on the status in both Sutherland and Assynt given for individual species in the Flora. It contains 324 species, listed for convenience of recording in the field in four groups, ferns and fern allies (24); grasses (37); sedges and rushes (36) other species (227). For these common species, only typical habitat and frequency in the tetrad as a whole is being recorded.

For all other species further details are being recorded, including a six-figure grid reference. Voucher material, of critical and difficult groups, is being collected for submission to referees, subject of course, to the conservation status of some species and areas.

It is planned to visit all tetrads at least twice, in early and late summer. By the end of 1991 visits will have been made to some 60 tetrads, mostly readily accessible ones, but including some less so.

The data gathered will be stored and manipulated on an IBM compatible PC, and it is hoped to publish the results of the survey within ten years.

5. Assistance.

We would welcome the help of any interested botanists resident in or visiting Assynt, particularly in respect of critical or difficult groups such as *Euphrasia* or *Hieracium*. We are interested in any unpublished records, especially those made since 1975. All such contributions will of course, be fully acknowledged. If you are able and willing to help, please contact us at the address given below.

Calltuinn,
Nedd,
Drumbeg,
By Lairg,
Sutherland IV27 4NN

Telephone Drumbeg (05713) 241.

THE NEW FLORA OF THE BRITISH ISLES

ALLAN STIRLING

This eagerly awaited volume will by now be on many members' bookshelves. It will be found to be a vast improvement on its predecessors, bringing taxonomy and nomenclature up to date and now including many of the introduced species and garden escapes frequently encountered by the field botanist. Many illustrations are included: the majority not easily referenced elsewhere.

A number of changes in nomenclatural treatment will be encountered by those accustomed to CTW/CTM. Examples of family names which will perhaps be unfamiliar are *Brassicaceae* (= *Cruciferae*), *Lamiaceae* (= *Labiatae*), and *Poaceae* (= *Gramineae*). Among the ferns, *Ceterach* and *Phyllitis* are taken out of *Asplenium* and re-instated at the genus level: a move which many will approve as a more logical treatment. *Asplenium viride* becomes *A. trichomanes-ramosum*. Other inter-generic changes include *Avenula* reverting to *Helictotrichon*, the bromes *Bromus inermis* and *ramosus* now under *Bromopsis*, and *Montia sibirica* and *M. perfoliata* revert to *Claytonia*. Many of the *Polygonums* become *Persicarias*, and the grass, Common Couch is now in the genus *Elytrigia*, although the Bearded Couch remains in *Elymus*. Don's Couch has been downgraded to a rather doubtful variety of the latter species.

The following is just a selection of familiar species names which have been subject to change in the new Flora (previous names in brackets) :-

Silene uniflora (*S. maritima*)
Erysimum cheiri (*Cheiranthus cheiri*)
Chaerophyllum temulum (*C. temulentum*)
Silene latifolia subsp. *alba* (*S. alba*)
Thymus polytrichus (*T. praecox*)
Lamium confertum (*L. molucellifolium*)
Leontodon saxatilis (*L. taraxacoides*)

Glyceria notata (*G. plicata*)
Alopecurus borealis (*A. alpinus*)

Considerable effort has been made to ensure the notes on distribution of species are as up to date as possible (see critical comment in Scottish Newsletter 10, 17, 1988. referring to this aspect in CTM). However, the occurrences of *Carex buxbaumii* in Argyll, of *Orchis morio* in Ayrshire and of *Schoenus ferrugineus* as native in east Perth, have been overlooked.

Printer's errors are commendably rare. The illustrations of *Vaccinium uliginosum* and *Ledum groenlandicum* (p354) have been wrongly numbered, and there is confusion with the numbering of the illustrations of *Urtica* on p 139.

The author, Professor Clive Stace, is to be congratulated on the production of this most welcome reference book.

THE MUIRHEAD MEMORIAL HERBARIUM

This collection of some of the late Win Muirhead's plants is located at Plymouth Polytechnic.

In a letter to Dr Ian Hedge, Curator of the Herbarium, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, Dr Geoffrey Halliday reports having worked through this collection in September 1991. The critical genera *Euphrasia*, *Rubus*, *Hieracium* and *Salix* are well represented and there are many specimens from the Borders and Hebrides. The Collection is well worth a look if anyone has an opportunity. The official labels have been done by the curator from CWM's rough notes - not always correctly transcribed. There is a very useful card index listing material by vice-counties within species.

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT
FOR SMALL PROJECTS
WILF NELSON RUM BURSARY**

**NATURE CONSERVANCY
COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND**

On 14th September 1989 Wilf Nelson suffered a fatal fall while carrying out routine survey work as Warden for the Nature Conservancy Council on the Island of Rum National Nature Reserve.

Wilf had already contributed a great deal to nature conservation, both on Rum and elsewhere, in his short career and such was the widespread feeling of loss amongst his many friends and colleagues that a memorial fund was established. This fund, which is still open for donations, now stands at around £6,000, and with the support of Wilf's widow, Rosemary, it was decided to establish a Bursary which will be used to support small research / survey projects centred on Rum.

Applications for financial support are therefore invited for individual projects to be carried out during 1993. Preference will be given to studies on the natural environment of Rum, particularly its wildlife, but consideration will also be given to projects dealing with conservation management, including education and interpretation. It seems likely that around £500 - £600 will be available for dispensing during 1993.

A brief summary of the project proposal and estimated costs should be sent initially to the Chief Warden, Rum and should arrive by 31st March 1993.

Further enquiries to Chief Warden, Rum (0687 2026) during normal office hours.

**CONSERVATION OF RARE PLANTS
IN SCOTLAND**

PHIL LUSBY

A partnership Project Between the Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland/Scottish Natural Heritage and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

With the recent division of the Nature Conservancy Council into three country conservation agencies (English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales and Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland) each agency is now responsible for co-ordinating its own rare plant conservation programme. In this respect the Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland and the RBG, Edinburgh have collaborated in a joint project concerning Scottish rare plants.

The main aims of the project are to increase our knowledge of the status and behaviour of rare plant populations and to collate existing information. Positive conservation measures will include seed collection for long term storage, experimental habitat restoration and, where appropriate, translocation trials. It is hoped that these positive measures will develop into a recovery programme whereby some rare plant populations will be enhanced.

The Royal Botanic Garden offers excellent facilities for education and it is planned to display a range of Scottish rare plants with educational labels within the RBG, and hopefully, to run a horticultural day school on aspects of rare plant conservation.

The project will rely on liaison and co-operation from many conservation organisations, research bodies and private individuals. I would be most grateful to hear from anybody who is either currently working on or who is interested in a particular rare species.

Phil Lusby, Project Officer,
Conservation of Rare Plants in Scotland
Royal Botanic Garden, Inverleith Row, Edinburgh EH3 5LR.

TARAXACUM RECORD STATISTICS

Taraxacum recorders have recently received, from Andrew Dudman, information, produced on his computer, for all named material up to the end of 1991. This shows the incidence of species and number of records for each VC in Great Britain and Ireland. Scottish statistics compare well with those for the rest of the country.

For our forty VCs (72 - 112) the average number of species recorded was 34. Seven VCs had over 50 species and ten had less than 20. Topping the league table were Galloway, Berwickshire and East Perth - areas where *Taraxacum* field meetings and the *Taraxacum* course at Kindrogen had been held. Areas requiring "working up" are West Lothian, West Perth, South Aberdeen, Clyde Isles, East Sutherland and Orkney.

SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

On the break-up of the Nature Conservancy Council on 1-4-91, the section in Scotland became the Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland. On 1-4-92 this merged with the Countryside Commission for Scotland to become Scottish Natural Heritage.

BSBI COMMITTEE FOR SCOTLAND

The following is the composition of the Committee from November 1991 to November 1992:-

Chairman - Dr RWM Corner; Secretary/Treasurer - Dr P Macpherson; Field Meetings Secretary - BH Thompson; Minutes Secretary - Dr MGB Hughes; Meetings Secretary - Dr M Watson; Members of Committee - Ms JB Babbs; P Lusby; D Donald; GP Rothero; MF Watson; J Winham.

Representing the NCC - Dr RAH Smith; representing the Botanical Society of Scotland - MM Scott.

At the AGM on 7th November 1992, three members will be elected to the Committee. The retiring members will be Dr Corner, Dr Hughes and J Winham, all of whom are eligible for re-election.

Nominations, signed by two members of the Society normally resident in Scotland, or who are Recorders for a vice-county in Scotland although not resident there, and with the written consent of the candidate, who must also qualify as above, should reach the undersigned at 15 Lubnaig Road Glasgow G43 2RY by 30th September 1992.

Peter Macpherson, Hon Secretary, Committee for Scotland.

RECORDERSHIP VC 91 - KINCARDINESHIRE

The present joint Recorders, Mr and Mrs E Birse have resigned but have expressed willingness to advise a successor and to help in recording plant species. Anyone interested in this vacancy should contact the Honorary Secretary as above.