KENT BOTANICAL RECORDING GROUP NEWSLETTER

No. 2 February 2011

What was the find of the year, in 2010?

Was it:

- new large populations of the scarce arable weeds, *Scandix pecten-veneris* (Shepherd's Needle) and *Silene noctiflora* (Night-flowering Catchfly)?
- a new location for *Suaeda vera* (Shrubby Sea-blite)?
- an inexplicable inland colony of *Euphorbia portlandica* (Portland Spurge), which should have been neither inland nor in Kent?
- a site bearing *Galium pumilum* (Slender Bedstraw), *Cuscuta epithymum* (Dodder) and *Polygala amarella* (Dwarf or Kentish Milkwort)?
- the reported return of *Myrica gale* (Bog-myrtle) from supposed 'extinction'?

All these are given in more detail in Kent Botany, published on KBRG's Kent page of the BSBI website, http://www.bsbi.org.uk/ and also as hard copy within the Kent Field Club's Bulletin (2011).

Helianthemum nummularium
at Queendown Warren
Photo: Lliam Rooney, 2010.

2010 field meetings

We held five meetings this year, under a programme put together after our inaugural meeting on 13 March 2010.

5 June 2010: Littlestone and Greatstone

Seventeen botanists attended our first field meeting, co-led by Owen Leyshon from the Romney Marsh Countryside Project and Geoffrey Kitchener, starting by the sea wall near Littlestone Water Tower. The intention was first to walk the coastal track northwards about 1.5 km as far as the north end of Romney Warren, and then look for *Hypochaeris glabra* (Smooth Cat's-ear), which has a very limited distribution in Kent at Lydd and St Mary's Bay, on the fixed sand dunes. We knew it was a morning flowerer, and therefore we should get there by noon. However, although Owen was encouraging us to press on, there were so many distractions on the way that by the time we reached the *Hypochaeris*, noon had come and gone and no flowers were visible. We were probably a bit early in the season, but a few plants were found, notwithstanding.

En route to the Warren, we began by viewing a few plants of *Eryngium planum* (Blue Eryngo) in a sandy vacant plot, where it has been for many decades. *Vulpia fasciculata* (Dune Fescue) was scattered along the coastal path where it meets the coastal shingle. Coastal sea defence works had led to some consolidation of sandy shingle by the path, and this provided a habitat also much favoured by rosettes of *Medicago minima* (Bur Medick).

When we reached the Warren, the short sandy turf of the fixed dunes drew us into a hands-and-knees exploration for diminutive plants such as *Scleranthus annuus* (Annual Knawel). Clovers were seen at just the right time – advanced enough for flowers and fruit, without the desiccation which sun and sand soon bring. *Trifolium glomeratum* (Clustered Clover), *T. subterraneum* (Subterranean Clover), *T. ornithopodiodes* (Bird's-foot Clover), *T. suffocatum* (Suffocated Clover), and *T. striatum* (Knotted Clover) were all present in close vicinity. Lunch was taken sitting on this flora, and so the Suffocated Clover became even more suffocated!

Below: Botanists exploring the short sandy turf...

Picture by Owen Leyshon

Turning southwards through the Warren, we encountered a well naturalised spurge, far from any buildings or tracks, which keyed out as *Euphorbia oblongata* (Balkan Spurge). This was a first vice county record for this species in East Kent. The barer sandy areas contained large quantities of *Poa bulbosa* (Bulbous Meadow-grass), now only visible as dried-up remnants, from under which the bulbous bases could be excavated. Other grasses included the attractive *Cynosurus echinatus* (Rough Dog's-tail) and *Lagurus ovatus* (Hare's-tail). On returning to the sea wall, we were able, with Brian Woodham's help, to find well-scattered *Festuca arenaria* (Rush-leaved Fescue).

Our original intention was to have spent half the day going north and the other half south, but the afternoon was well advanced as we re-passed our starting point, heading south towards Greatstone. This took us to New Romney Town Council's Littlestone Green, where Owen described the encouragement which the Romney Marsh Countryside Project provides towards appropriate management (mown, but not over-mown grassland), given the interesting flora flourishing here. *Medicago polymorpha* (Toothed Medick) was much in evidence, and we counted the plants of *Silene conica* (Sand Catchfly) flourishing in disturbed sandy ground. Near some beach huts, apparently associated with them but flourishing on their own account, we chanced upon 3 purple-flowered plants which Sue Buckingham identified as *Verbascum phoeniceum* (Purple Mullein). This also was a first vc 15 (East Kent) sighting.

We then made back towards our starting point, passing some white flowered *Solanum dulcamara* (Bittersweet) on the shingle. For some of the party, there were still opportunities to see plants such as *Allium neapolitanum* (Neapolitan Garlic) and *Oenothera stricta* (Fragrant Evening-primrose), but our numbers began to deplete with the passage of the day. By the finish, we had made 287 records. It was generally agreed that, having not succeeded in covering all the territory towards Greatstone to which we had aspired, we should aim for a further meeting to do so, in a future programme.

28 June 2010 : Holly Hill / Halling

This meeting, attended by ten KBRG botanists was co-led by David Johnson and Geoffrey Kitchener, and was directed towards assessing the presence of *Herminium monorchis* (Musk Orchid) and recording associated species. This was for the purposes of the BSBI's Threatened Plants Project, which is gathering data about threatened species, in particular about those which have been classified as threatened due to decline in recent years. It is hoped that the data collected will assist in understanding their ecology and reasons for decline.

The two West Kent sites selected by the BSBI for survey appeared unsuitable for the species, and the meeting surveyed two substitute sites, where the orchid was expected to be found. The first of these was below Birling Hill road, on the downs scarp slope, facing south, where five spikes were present in chalk grassland, despite scrub growth in the vicinity. Within a radius of 1m of one of the spikes, 33 species were noted.

Below: assessing the sites and orchid spikes

Picture by Geoffrey Kitchener

The second site was to the north-east, towards the Medway gap, and lay in a valley clearing on thin soil over chalk, with neighbouring trees and scrub having been cut back. Here were eight orchid spikes, some perilously close to a footpath, but nearly invisible, even if one knew them to be present. Within 1m of one of the groups of spikes, 31 species were recorded, many being the same as recorded at the previous site. This location could be susceptible to trampling and, unless cutting back is maintained, scrub re-growth could shade it out.

12 July 2010: Dover area

Six members met at the National Trust Car Park at the White Cliffs visitor centre, with a view to looking at *Juniperus communis* (Juniper) and *Orobanche picridis* (Oxtongue Broomrape), with the proposed rare plant register in mind. (Others were put off by the weather elsewhere in Kent, but it transpired that Dover was the most clement place to be.)

The meeting was co-led by Robert Sonnen of the National Trust and Sue Buckingham. Robert took the group down below the car parks to a ledge above the Docks called the Tramway, where the group saw 14 *Orobanche picridis* plants - all in quite good condition and a novelty to the KBRG members present. They mostly had very immature host plants of *Picris hieracioides* (now *Helminthotheca echiodes*, Bristly Oxtongue) beside them. Robert said that Fred Rumsey had previously verified the plants. It had apparently once been thought that the flowering period of the species was very restricted and *Orobanche* plants flowering much before or after the late June/ early July period were generally believed to be *O. minor* (Common Broomrape). Now it is believed that all

are *O. picridis*. The White Cliffs/ National Trust in conjunction with the White Cliffs Countryside Project apparently look after this site with a late mowing done by a contractor, although this is not an annual event. The main Kentish site for this species is at Oldstairs Bay, but the group did not have time to visit that as well.

We then went along to Langdon Hole and the very edge of the cliff for a view of a juniper from about four yards. The remaining seven plants can be seen from an amazing footpath which zigzags all the way down the vertical cliff to the sea. However, only three plants appeared visible to us, and they were not in good condition, being very exposed. We walked down a good part of the path to a plant of *Geranium sanguineum* (Bloody Crane's-bill), which must have been an escape or planting, although in wild surroundings. We recorded, also with questionable status, *Salvia pratensis* (Meadow Clary), together with *Silene nutans* (Nottingham Carchfly), *Euphorbia exigua* (Dwarf Spurge), *Rubia peregrina* (Wild Madder), *Onobrychis viciifolia* (Sainfoin) and *Brassica oleracea* (Wild Cabbage) - all for the rare plant register. General records totalled about 170. We looked for *Orobanche elatior* (Knapweed Broomrape), which Sue had seen in Langdon Hole many years ago but we couldn't find it, although *Centaurea scabiosa* (Greater Knapweed) was plentiful.

31 July 2010: The Isle of Grain

The Isle of Grain provided a contrasting environment to the other coastal locations which featured in the KBRG meetings programme, with the presence of heavy industry and gravel workings (fortunately not being worked that day). Seven members met, with Sue Buckingham acting as leader, at the car park where the B2001 gives up, with nowhere further to go. The purpose of the meeting was to look for the extent of *Hordeum marinum* (Sea Barley) in tetrad TQ87Y, and to record associated species so as to assist in the BSBI Threatened Plants Project - as with the 21 June meeting, although this targeted a different species. This purpose was amply fulfilled by the selection of four sample populations of *Hordeum marinum* from the many which were present to the north west and south east of the car park.

The meeting worked along a footpath north west as far as an army danger zone fence, and while some tempting saltmarsh lay in the next tetrad, the group did not get that far, and found plenty to record in TQ8877 and TQ8976.

Rare plant register sightings included *Inula crithmoides* (Golden-samphire), *Trifolium squamosum* (Sea Clover) and *Polypogon monspeliensis* (Annual Beard grass), the latter of which was hybridizing with *Agrostis stolonifera* (Creeping Bent) to produce *X Agropogon lutosus* (formerly *X Agropogon littoralis*). Another hybrid grass encountered was the cross between Sea and Sand Couch, *Elytrigia x acuta* nothosubsp. *obtusiuscula* (*E. atherica x juncea*), present above the beach. It was a great help to have Eric Philp with us for identification. In terms of visual impact, the highlight of the day was an area 350m x 30m above the beach of flowering *Eryngium maritimum* (Sea-holly).

21 August 2010: the Rother Levels (joint meeting with Sussex Botanical Recording Society)

Picture by Roy Wells

Above: Kent and Sussex botanists straddling the county boundary (the Kent Ditch), with Marsh-mallow in the foreground

A total of eighteen botanists from KBRG (leader, Geoffrey Kitchener) and Sussex Botanical Recording Society (leader, Roy Wells) met at New Bridge (TQ 9150.2536) to explore the Rother levels in the middle of nowhere, between Iden and the Isle of Oxney. This has not been an island since the 13th century, and the levels are now about 3m above sea level.

Our Sussex colleagues were seeking to boost the number of records in this area for the purposes of an updated Sussex Flora and the party set off westwards along the banks of the River Rother, recording everything as we went. At this point, the entire width of the Rother lay in East Sussex, the boundaries of both administrative county and botanical vice-counties coinciding.

Amongst the highlights for the Sussex contingent were *Petroselinum segetum* (Corn Parsley) in quantity along the river wall, *Impatiens capensis* (Orange Balsam)and *Rumex* x *schulzei* (the hybrid between Curled and Clustered Docks), both by the river bank. Roy Wells' grapnel proved invaluable in pulling aquatics such as *Potamogeton lucens* (Shining Pondweed), *P. perfoliatum* (Perfoliate Pondweed) and *Ceratophyllum demersum* (Rigid Hornwort) from the Rother!

More pertinent to this report are the Kentish records, and we reached the county boundary by lunchtime, having spent a thorough 2½ hours combing the first 1.5km of the riverside path at traditional botanists' pace. At this point, the river wall touches on the Kent Ditch, and we worked the Kent side of the channel, with the advantage that anything in the water itself could fairly be

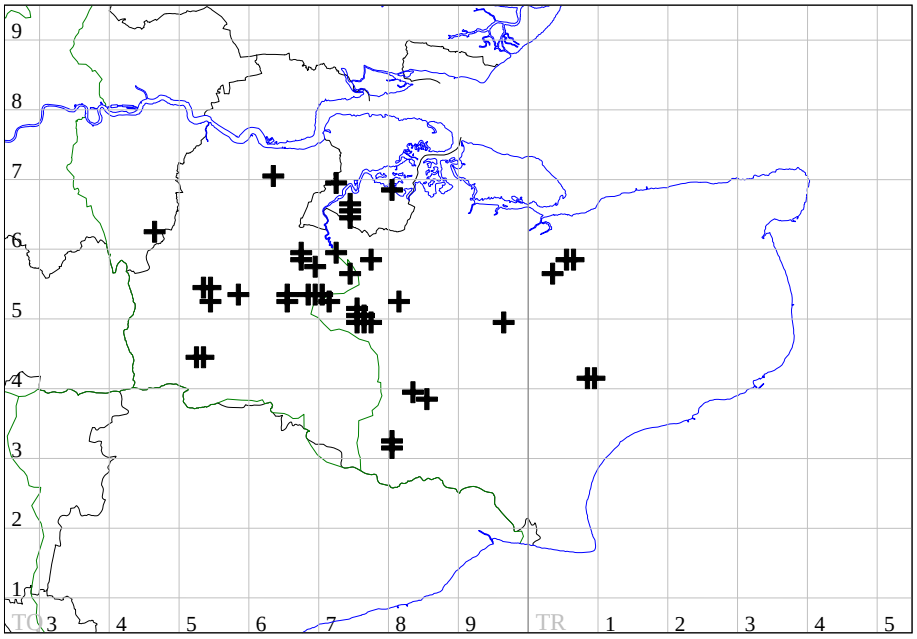
claimed as a record for both counties. The relatively scarce water-plantain *Alisma lanceolatum* (Narrow-leaved Water-Plantain) was common in the ditch, together with the more usual *A. plantago-aquatica* (Water-Plantain). We also found *Spirodela polyrhiza* (Greater Duckweed) and *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* (Frogbit). The Kent side held *Oenanthe fistulosa* (Tubular Water-dropwort) and on the Sussex side was Marsh-mallow, *Althaea officinalis*. This was compensated by much more *Althaea* being found in another ditch further eastwards, to which we progressed via the riparian Sussex Border Path.

We recorded a total of 174 plants in Kent, in TR9025 and TR8925, these squares usefully giving us records not only in different tetrads, but also in different 10km squares. We are very grateful for the skills and enthusiasm of the Sussex botanists which facilitated this recording. All agreed that such joint meetings would be desirable in future programmes of both groups.

Mistletoe Update

In Newsletter No. 1, members were invited to submit Mistletoe records, which would enable a start on recording early in the year and demonstrate the breadth and depth of coverage which the group could readily achieve. The results are more fully reported in Kent Botany, but this distribution map shows what can be achieved over a relatively short time. The absence of sightings in East Kent appears to correspond with a genuine absence of the plant.

Viscum album (Mistletoe) 2010



Now, you can log on the BSBI website and see that our records have made a difference! Go to their on-line distribution maps – see http://www.bsbi.org.uk/maps_scheme.html On the hectad maps for *Viscum album* there are shown Mistletoe records for Great Britain and Ireland. The blue dots are the most up-to-date records, being for the current date class which began on 1 January 2010, and Kent is well represented!

What's in a name?

(*Rosa pimpinellifolia* would smell as sweet as *Rosa spinosissima*...)

Each time a new Flora is produced, we are brought to recognise the updating that goes on for the latin names we use for our plants. The 3rd edition of Clive Stace's New Flora of the British Isles (2010) is no exception to this, and here are the name changes which are most likely to be relevant to Kent botanists. In some cases, the new versions are quite familiar and may well be the current ones in older books which we may have been using. It is perhaps a relief to know that the mouthful of *Carex viridula* ssp. *oedocarpa* (Common Yellow-sedge) can be spat out in favour of straightforward *C. demissa*. And how many of us ever abandoned the name *Lotus tenuis* (Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil) in favour of *Lotus glaber*, for we are now back to *Lotus tenuis* again (which sounds more apt anyway)?

This list shown below on and the next page does not cover everything which has been found in the county, but should cover most of what may be expected to be found, other than hybrids. Note that "Old name" means usage in the 2nd edition of Clive Stace's New Flora. There are some changes in the 3rd edition which were widely adopted before its publication, e.g. Eric Philp's New Atlas was written when the 2nd edition was current, but updates many of those old names.

Old name	**Stace 3 name**	**Old name**	**Stace 3 name**
Aceras anthropophorum	*Orchis anthropophora*	*Malus domestica*	*Malus pumila*
Althaea hirsuta	*Malva setigera*	*Matricaria recutita*	*Matricaria chamomilla*
Anagallis minima	*Centunculus minimus*	*Medicago sativa* ssp. *varia*	*Medicago sativa* nothossp.*varia*
Arenaria serpyllifolia ssp. *leptoclados*	*Arenaria leptoclados*	*Monotropa hypopitys*	*Hypopitys monotropa*
Carex curta	*Carex canescens*	*Orchis morio*	*Anacamptis morio*
Carex ovalis	*Carex leporina*	*Orchis ustulata*	*Neotinea ustulata*
Carex viridula ssp brachyrryncha	*Carex lepidocarpa*	*Ornithogalum angustifolium*	*Ornithogalum umbellatum* ssp.*campestre*
Carex viridula ssp.*oedocarpa*	*Carex demissa*	*Orobanche artemisiae-campestris*	*Orobanche picridis*

Old name	Stace 3 name	Old name	Stace 3 name
Ceterach officinarum	*Asplenium ceterach*	*Orobanche minor* var. *maritima*	*Orobanche minor* ssp. *maritima*
Chrysanthemum segetum	*Glebionis segetum*	*Orobanche minor* var.*minor*	*Orobanche minor ssp.minor*
Coronopus didymus	*Lepidium didymum*	*Papaver dubium* ssp.*dubium*	*Papaver dubium*
Coronopus squamatus	*Lepidium squamatum*	*Papaver dubium* ssp.*lecoqii*	*Papaver lecoqii*
Duchesnia indica	*Potentilla indica*	*Parthenocissus inserta*	*Parthenocissus vitacea*
Erigeron acer	*Erigeron acris*	*Photinia davidiana*	*Stranvaesia davidiana*
Erodium malachoides	*Erodium malacoides*	*Phyllitis scolopendrium*	*Asplenium scolopendrium*
Euphorbia serrulata	*Euphorbia stricta*	*Picris echioides*	*Helminthotheca echiodes*
Euphrasia anglica	*Euphrasia officinalis* ssp.*anglica*	*Potentilla palustris*	*Comarum palustre*
Festuca arundinacea	*Schedonorus arundinaceus*	*Ranunculus ficaria*	*Ficaria verna*
Festuca gigantea	*Schedonorus giganteus*	*Ranunculus ficaria* ssp. *bulbilifer*	*Ficaria verna* ssp. *verna*
Festuca pratensis	*Schedonorus pratensis*	*Ranunculus ficaria* ssp. *ficaria*	*Ficaria verna ssp. fertilis*
Fragaria x ananassa	*Fragaria ananassa*	*Rorippa microphylla*	*Nasturtium microphyllum*
Galium mollugo	*Galium album*	*Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum*	*Nasturtium officinale*
Gymnadenia conopsea ssp.*densiflora*	*Gymnadenia densiflora*	*Rosa pimpinellifolia*	*Rosa spinosissima*
Hedera helix ssp.*hibernica*	*Hedera hibernica*	*Sagina apetala* ssp. *erecta*	*Sagina filicaulis*
Helictotrichon pratense	*Avenula pratensis*	*Sanguisorba minor*	*Poterium sanguisorba*
Helictotrichon pubescens	*Avenula pubescens*	*Sanguisorba minor* ssp.*minor*	*Poterium sanguisorba* ssp. *sanguisorba*
Lavatera arborea	*Malva arborea*	*Sanguisorba minor* ssp. *muricata*	*Poterium sanguisorba* ssp. *balearicum*
Leontodon autumnalis	*Scorzoneroides autumnalis*	*Seriphidium maritimum*	*Artemisia maritima*
Listera ovata	*Neottia ovata*	*Stachys officinalis*	*Betonica officinalis*
Lotus glaber	*Lotus tenuis*	*Stellaria uliginosa*	*Stellaria alsine*
Lychnis coronaria	*Silene coronaria*	*Triglochin maritimum*	*Triglochin maritima*
Lychnis flos-cuculi	*Silene flos-cuculi*	*Triglochin palustre*	*Triglochin palustris*
Lycospersicon esculentum	*Solanum lycopersicon*	*Yucca recurvifolia*	*Yucca gloriosa* var. *recurvifolia*

These changes do affect our recording, not just as regards using an up-to-date name. Where a plant such as Ivy could be recorded just as *Hedera helix*, without worrying whether it was Common Ivy (*H. helix* ssp. *helix*) or Atlantic or Irish Ivy (*H. helix* ssp. *hibernica*), we now need to make a definite decision which it is. This is because the latter is treated as a separate species. It's quite possible that *H. hibernica* has been under-recorded in Kent. The same principle applies to the other cases where subspecies have become full species, e.g. *Arenaria leptoclados* (Slender Sandwort).

What will not be readily apparent from a table of name changes is how the New Flora has changed classification, the grouping and sequencing of plants to provide an understanding of their relationships. This has been undertaken so as to reflect the increasing number of studies comparing the DNA sequence data of different plants. So, for example, watercresses, which were formerly placed with a number of cresses under the genus *Rorippa* (Yellow-cresses), have been found to be more closely related to the bitter-cresses (*Cardamin*e). Accordingly, they are better separated into another genus, *Nasturtium*, which is where they were until 1905 - nothing to do with the garden *Nasturtium,* of course which is in the genus *Tropaeolum* and was originally thought of by gardeners as resembling watercress, supposedly on the basis of the flavour of the leaves.

Rare Plant Register progress!

Well done, all who contributed to the total of 889 RPR plant records (against a list of 257 taxa) which were input to the database as at the end of January 2011! Some of these represent duplicate sightings by different recorders, but duplicates can still be helpful in providing independent assessments of population size, habitat and threat data.

There is still a considerable way to go before reasonable coverage is achieved, especially as records so far are, understandably, skewed towards the more popular subjects. Out of the total of 889 records, 141 can be attributed to five well-recorded orchid species. However, the eight "most recorded" plants also include *Poa infirma* (Early Meadow-grass, 37 records) and *Hordeum marinum* (Sea Barley, 22) – which could not readily have been predicted.

On the whole, KBRG members preferred, rather than adopting a species (as suggested in Newsletter No. 1), to record those RPR plants which were on home territory or which were present where it was intended to botanise anyway. However, many special trips were also made to seek out particular plants, and valuable data were provided. In addition, negative data – where a species can no longer be found – is also useful in its own right.

The process of writing up accounts is under way, but to guide rare plant register recording in 2011, below are given the register species for which no 2010 records had been received as at the end of January 2011. This list is – to help find familiar names – in alphabetical sequence for old names, but these are given in brackets where replaced by Stace 3 (see above article, *What's in a name?).* There have been some possible sightings of listed plants which need confirmation. Alas, there have also been sightings which have not resulted in communicated records. It is not always easy to translate notebook jottings!

*Adonis annua, Alchemilla filicaulis ssp. vestita, Alopecurus aequalis, Anagallis arvensis subsp. foemina, Centunculus minimus (= Anagallis minima), Apium inundatum, Arabis hirsuta, Asplenium septentrionale, Baldellia ranunculoides, Bromus hordeaceus subsp. thominei, Bromus secalinus, Callitriche truncata, Carex canescens (= Carex curta), Carex extensa, Carex pulicaris, Carex rostrata, Carex lepidocarpa (= Carex viridula ssp. brachyrrhyncha), Catabrosa aquatica, Centaurea calcitrapa, Chamaemelum nobile, Chenopodium bonus-henricus, Chenopodium murale, Chenopodium vulvaria, Dactylorhiza incarnata, Descurainia sophia, Dryopteris aemula, Eleogiton fluitans, Epilobium palustre, Equisetum sylvaticum, Eryngium campestre, Euphrasia officinalis (= Euphrasia anglica), Euphrasia confusa, Fumaria parviflora, Fumaria vaillantii, Galium uliginosum, Gastridium ventricosum, Gentianella anglica, Groenlandia densa, Gymnadenia densiflora (= Gymnadenia conopsea subsp. densiflora), Hypericum maculatum x perforatum, Hypericum montanum, Iberis amara, Isolepis cernua, Juncus subnodulosus, Lactuca saligna, Lepidium heterophyllum, Leymus arenarius, Mentha pulegium, Minuartia hybrida, Misopates orontium, Hypopitys monotropa (= Monotropa hypopitys), Myriophyllum verticillatum, Nardus stricta, Neotinia ustulata (= Orchis ustulata), Orobanche purpurea, Osmunda regalis, Parapholis incurva, Parentucellia viscosa, Persicaria minor, Pilosella peleteriana [or perhaps extinct?], Polygonum rurivagum, Potamogeton acutifolius, Potamogeton coloratus, Potamogeton friesii, Potamogeton obtusifolius, Potamogeton pusillus, Potentilla anglica, Potentilla argentea, Ranunculus hederaceus, Raphanistrum raphanistrum L. ssp. maritimus, Rosa agrestis, Rosa pimpimellifolia (= Rosa spinosissima), Rumex crispus subsp. uliginosus, Ruppia cirrhosa, Salicornia fragilis Salicornia obscura, Salix purpurea, Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani x triqueter, Serratula tinctoria, Silene gallica, Sium latifolium, Sparganium natans, Stachys arvensis, Teucrium botrys, Thalictrum flavum, Tilia cordata, Triglochin palustris (= Triglochin palustre), Ulex gallii, Utricularia vulgaris, Vulpia ciliata subsp. ambigua *, Vulpia unilateralis, Wahlenbergia hederacea, Wolffia arrhiza.*

How to record?

It seems so simple a question, but there is certainly not a single answer. Over the last year or so, your editor has been, following retirement, doing more plant recording than ever before. I have asked myself this question many times during that period, and here are some of the answers which came up.

Back of envelope

Yes, I really managed to recycle a lot of paper at one stage!

- Advantages: green and inexpensive.
- Disadvantages: easy to lose or mistake for rubbish before data transferred to computer.

Voice recorder

I borrowed a digital recorder, with a view to dictating records as I walked and transcribing them to computer afterwards at home. In theory, this was fine; but my lack of competence in relation to the pause switch meant that the whole outing was recorded in real time, with occasional short bursts of named species, long blanks with breathing and much of the conversation in the pub afterwards.

- Advantages: paperless, no need to worry about pencils or glasses.
- Disadvantages: equipment may be more sensitive to bad weather and requires competence to operate.

Recording card

First, one has to find a recording card which gives a list of plants to be ticked off as one finds them. The BSBI provides a format for each vice county. I have adapted the card and format in a couple of ways. One way was to enable the use of a single card per tetrad, but in such a way that it is clear in which 1km square the plant was seen. (This is in accord with the KBRG recording policy of 1km square or higher resolution recording.) The other adaptation was to provide for the option of a tetrad map to be printed on the card, obtained free on the internet from Ordnance Survey get-a-map. I'm happy to make this card available by email to anyone who wants (and this may provide an incentive for me to update the plant names to Stace 3).

- Advantages: it's easy to see from the card what hasn't been recorded from the area, so as to be able to look out for the gaps. However, where you make repeated visits to a square, you have to tick off in such a way that your latest visit is not confused with earlier ones when records are entered up on computer. It's also an advantage that your card won't list anything rare, so you then know it's worth recording extra details, instead of just ticking off a name.
- Disadvantages. There are a lot of plant names, and hence they are in very small print. This can be mitigated: Doug Grant has devised a card with a shorter list of plants likely to be found and so it accommodates a larger font size. Another disadvantage is that if you subsequently find that you have wandered into another recording square without realising, it can be very difficult to unravel where your records belong.

Notebook

I come back to this method most frequently, even though not ideal.

- Advantages: it's easier to handle than a recording card. If you get into a muddle about which square you've been recording in, your finds are recorded in order, so that it's generally possible afterwards to trace where you were, and where they belong, by viewing your route on a Google Earth based facility, such as the virtual map on Surrey Botanical Society's website (which shows satellite photography and map references).
- Disadvantages: it's not so easy to work out what hasn't already been recorded for the relevant area, although once records have got onto the database which I maintain, I can print them off in advance or otherwise make them available.

Whatever method is used, at the end of the day it is just a stepping stone on the way to the record being entered on a database, where it has real value in terms of information which can be shared, interrogated, used in research and preserved. The card, envelope, notebook or whatever then ceases to be relevant...

A couple of other notes on recording:

- **Digital photos** can be excellent evidence of discoveries, but I shall be treating them with more caution in future. In 2008 I was shown photos of what the finder quite rightly thought was something unusual, from which I identified *Dittrichia viscosa*. Using this plant to make a point in Newsletter No. 1 has encouraged visitors, who have been able to examine it critically in the field and query that identification. Having been supplied now with material, I agree that this is atypical *Solidago canadensis* affected by growth conditions. I would still have identified *Dittrichia* from the photographs, even now; however, Newsletter No. 1 has retrospectively gone into a second edition to remove that confusion. Apologies to anyone disappointed by this plant!

- **Where recording has taken place at a KBRG meeting**, we have endeavoured to circulate by email afterwards checklists of plants recorded, showing how effectively the group is operating as recorders. At each of our KBRG meetings so far, there has been at least one person recording. Where we have had two, and the results have been consolidated afterwards, each recorder has always noted something which the other has not. This is not a reflection on the recorders! Meetings do spread out or straggle, so it's important that finds are communicated within the meeting itself.

Below: *Hyoscyamus niger* (Henbane)

Picture by Lliam Rooney

Spellcheck species – the new flora?

The Ghost Orchid is not the only phantom!

Spellcheck programs automatically convert our carefully typed botanical names into new taxa with 'normalised' spellings. The plants we intended to refer to then become a fictitious flora with a ghostly resemblance to reality. Some of this new flora is described below:

Agrostis capillaries
A grass which is good for the circulation.

Carex panacea
Sedge with medicinal properties which, taken with a pinch of salt, will cure all ills.

Dactylorhiza fuchsia
Marsh-orchids appear to be in an active state of evolution and this one is apparently in the course of convergent evolution towards the family *Onagraceae*.

Epilobium x mentions
A hybrid willowherb referred to frequently.

Parentucellia viscose
Yellow Bartsia, as appearing in patterned rayon fabrics.

Polygala amarelle
Plant used in the production of sour cherry flavoured milkshake.

Rumex conglomerates
A dock employed in the building industry for the manufacture of concrete.

Veronica Montana
A speedwell from North America, especially in the neighbourhood of Idaho, Wyoming and Dakota.

Check your spelling – it could have been transmogrified!

Does the newsletter cover what you want to read?

We still have some requested topics to carry over for future issues, but would welcome any further suggestions. Please comment to Geoffrey Kitchener.

We regret that unforeseen circumstances led to the gap between Newsletter No. 1 and this issue. Members with email should have received updates and meeting reminders during the course of 2010, but there has not been the opportunity to extend those notifications to members without email.

Contributions for the next newsletter will be welcome. Whilst KRBG does not produce a research journal as such, there may be scope to put substantial articles or papers onto the website by way of publication as an alternative.

Contributions of photos are most welcome (if sent by e mail, 300dpi minimum, please!).

Thanks to Kate Kersey, Sue Buckingham and Sarah Kitchener for help in compiling this newsletter.

Also to Lliam Rooney, Owen Leyshon and Roy Wells for photographs.

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The editor, Geoffrey Kitchener, wishes to draw attention to the fact that neither he, nor the Kent Botanical Recording Group, are answerable for opinions which contributors may express in their articles; each author is alone responsible for the contents and substance of their work.

Published by the Kent Botanical Recording Group: Cromlix, Otford Lane, Halstead, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 7EB