# Recording 65

## A botanical newsletter for North-West Yorkshire



Issue 1. Winter 2008/09

**Welcome** to this our first newsletter for VC65 which is intended to keep you up-to date with botanical activities in North-west Yorkshire. Linda Robinson and myself are the new BSBI recorders for the vice-county having taken over from Deborah Millward earlier this year. Deborah decided to retire due to other commitments and we thank her for all her hard work over the years, and especially for the support she has given us during the hand over. We hope to build on her successes, most notably the publication of the *Flora of Wensleydale* and her contribution to the recent *New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora*.

One of the first things that struck us when we took over was the lack of resident botanists in the county (we are only aware of three resident BSBI members!). However, we know that many of you visit the county and make many interesting records. We would like you to send us these records but it is also our job to let you know which species and areas in the county need further work.

In this issue we have therefore identified a number of species which hope to concentrate on in the coming years (in preparation for a Rare Plant Register) as well as some of the less well recorded areas of the county. If you would like to help with these then please don't hesitate to get in touch. We also provide describe some recent finds and the results of recent surveys which we hope you find it useful and interesting.

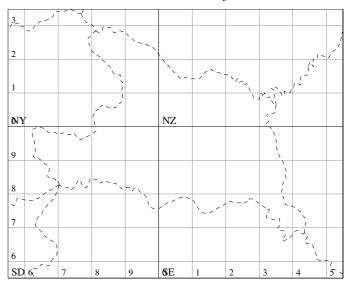
Kevin Walker & Linda Robinson *BSBI recorders for VC65* 

## A brief tour of the county

Many of you are probably not familiar with the county so here is brief botanical tour of its boundary. VC 65 is a relatively big county by British standards covering 24,081 km² (the 39th largest in GB). It encompasses 39 hectads including 11 which are entirely within the VC (see map opposite) - these are given in bold in the following list: SE36, SE46, SD97, SE07, SE17, SE27, SE37, SE47, SD68, SD78, SD88, SD98, SE08, SE18, SE28, SE38, SD69, SD79, SD89,

SD99, SE09, SE19, SE29, SE39, NY80, NY90, NZ00, NZ10, NZ20, NZ30, NY81, NY91, NZ01, NZ11, NZ21, NY72, NY82, NY92, NZ02. We start our tour on the summit of Crag Hill in the SE corner of the county where VC65 meets three other counties (VCs 64, 60 and 69). From here the boundary runs over the NE slopes of Whernside and crosses the northern edge of Upper Wharfedale above Oughtershaw crossing the B6160 north of Cray to the summit of Buckden Pike.

## Botanical vice-county 65



From here it follows the northern watershed of Nidderdale meeting the River Ure near to West Tanfield north of Ripon. The Ure then forms a natural southern boundary as far as Boroughbridge (although there are complications where the river has been re-aligned) where it meets the River Swale just north of the confluence.

The Rivers Swale and Wiske form the eastern boundary of the county as far north as the Tees at Stockburn. It then runs west along the south bank of the Tees as far as Maize Beck, taking in the botanical delights of High and Low Force, Holwick Meadows and Cronkley Fell. The western boundary is very indistinct crossing a remote area of moorland via Mickle Fell, the Stainmore Gap (and the A66) and the head of Swaledale. From here it follows the

watershed on the Mallerstang ridge before crossing the upper Eden Valley and the southern half of the Howgill Fells. The final stretch runs south along the Lune Valley to the south of Sedbergh and across the south of Dentdale to Crag Hill.

#### Alchemilla in Teesdale

One of Teesdale's many claims to botanical fame are its Lady's-mantles, three of which appear to be confined to the region (*Alchemilla acutiloba*, *A. monticola* and *A. subcrenata*). It also has notable populations of *A. wichurae* and *A. glomerulans*, both of which are very uncommon in Northern England, as well the more widespread species, *A. glabra*, *A. xanthochlora* and *A. filicaulis*. *A. minima* and *A. glaucescens* have yet to recorded in Teesdale but may well occur in the area (both occur further south in VC65).

Surveys by Margaret Bradshaw in the 1950s and since 2000 have shown worrying declines for the five uncommon species in Teesdale and Weardale, all of which occur in meadows and calcareous grassland on the south side of the River Tees (VC65). It is therefore encouraging to report the results of a survey of meadows near Holwick carried out in May of this year. Despite torrential rain a group led by Margaret recorded healthy populations of A. subcrenata in meadows near to Holwick where Margaret first noticed the plant in the 1950s. The meadows also support small populations of A. glomerulans and A. wichurae, as well as a range of other localized VC65 species including Crepis mollis, Gentianella campestris, and Pseudorchis albida (found by John O'Reilly in June - see below).

#### **Boreal outliers on Great Shunner Fell**

In August 2007 Linda Robinson made some spectacular discoveries on Great Shunner Fell. Whilst searching flushes for *Saxifraga hirculus* Linda discovered *Carex vaginata* and *Alopecurus borealis* both of which were new for the county.

Alpine foxtail is an extremely rare species in Britain although it has been recorded in several new sites following reductions in grazing on the high fells since foot and mouth. Outside Britain it only occurs in Svalbard, arctic Russia and the Urals, so the VC65 population is the most southerly site in the world. Like the foxtail, the population of sheathed sedge is also close to the southern edge of its European range in VC65. Until a few years ago it was only known

from Scotland but since foot and mouth several new sites have been found in northern England. The VC65 colonies of both species are very small and were presumably overlooked when the fells were overgrazed. They may be more widespread in the county so please keep a look out for them in baserich flushes (often in unpromising looking terrain) above 650m.

Other notable boreal species found recently on Shunner Fell include *Epilobium alsinifolium*, *Carex bigelowii* and the hybrid with *C. nigra* (*C.* × *decolorans*), confirmed by Rod Corner and Linda Robinson during a visit this year. The mountain must therefore be one of the most notable in Britain for its assemblage of boreal species, many of which are at or near there absolute southern limits in the world.

## A new hybrid willow for England

Another remarkable fine this year was the newly described hybrid willow, *Salix* × *lochsiensis* (*S. myrsinifolia* × *phylicifolia* × *repens*), discovered by David Tenant amongst basalt rocks on the S bank of the River Tees. This is the first English and only the second British record for this triple hybrid (see *Watsonia* **26**: 381, 2007).

## **BSBI Threatened Plant Project**

During this summer a number of recorders undertook surveys of populations of Blysmus compressus, Crepis mollis and Gentianella campestris as part of the BSBI's national Threatened Plant project. This has resulted in many new records as well as confirmations of populations that were either thought to be lost or for which the exact localities were not known. The discovery of three populations of Crepis mollis was especially pleasing as this is a very rare species in VC65 and it has not been seen at many old sites for a number of years. This included one site in Wensleydale where it has and two small populations near Holwick where it occurs on species-rich banks in meadows very close to the River Tees. Many thanks to those who helped with fieldwork most notably John & Clare O'Reilly and Jeremy Roberts.

This project will cover a new set of species in 2009. In VC65 this will include the relocation and survey of populations of *Carex ericetorum*, *Coeloglossum viride*, *Gnaphalium sylvaticum* and *Vicia orobus*. Please let us know if you would like to be involved.

## Recording plans for the future

As new recorders our immediate plans are to deal with the backlog of paper records that we inherited from Deborah and that recorders have sent in to us this year. This is likely to be a big job as there are literally 1000s of records lurking in our files and card indexes. These will be inputted into MapMate over the next few winters and added to the c.40,000 records or so already in the *Vascular Plants Database* at CEH Wallingford (formerly Monks Wood).

Initially we intend to focus our recording efforts on species that are either nationally rare or scarce (i.e. recorded in less than  $100\ 10\times 10$  km squares) or classified as threatened in the new Red Data List of the British flora published in 2005. Currently this includes the 126 native and archaeophyte taxa listed below:

Alchemilla acutiloba Alchemilla glaucescens Alchemilla glomerulans Alchemilla minima Alchemilla monticola Alchemilla subcrenata Alchemilla wichurae Allium oleraceum Alopecurus borealis Anthemis arvensis Arabis glabra Asplenium trichomanes ssp. pachyrachis Bartsia alpina Blysmus compressus Bromopsis benekenii *Cardamine impatiens* Carex capillaris Carex digitata Carex ericetorum Carex muricata ssp. muricata Carex vaginata Chenopodium bonus-henricus Chrysanthemum segetum Circaea alpina Clinopodium calamintha Cochlearia micacea Cochlearia pyrenaica Coeloglossum viride Crepis mollis Cynoglossum officinale Cypripedium calceolus

Dactylorhiza traunsteineri

Daphne mezereum

Draba muralis

Actaea spicata

Hypericum montanum Juncus alpinoarticulatus Juncus compressus Kobresia simpliciuscula Limosella aquatica Linum perenne Luronium natans Lysimachia thyrsiflora Melampyrum sylvaticum Meum athamanticum Minuartia hybrida Minuartia verna Myosotis alpestris Myosotis stolonifera Myosurus minimus Myriophyllum verticillatum Oenanthe fistulosa Ophrys insectifera Orchis morio Orchis ustulata Orobanche alba Orobanche rapum-genistae Orobanche reticulata Papaver argemone Persicaria minor Peucedanum ostruthium Pilularia globulifera Polemonium caeruleum Polygala amarella Polystichum lonchitis Potamogeton coloratus Potamogeton friesii Potentilla crantzii Potentilla fruticosa Potentilla neumanniana

Primula farinosa

Dryas octopetala Dryopteris submontana *Epipactis atrorubens Epipactis phyllanthes* Equisetum pratense Equisetum variegatum Eriophorum gracile Erophila majuscula Euphorbia exigua Euphrasia rostkoviana ssp. Euphrasia rostkoviana ssp. rostkoviana Filago vulgaris Fumaria purpurea Galeopsis angustifolia Galeopsis speciosa Genista anglica Gentiana verna Gentianella campestris Gnaphalium sylvaticum Groenlandia densa Gymnocarpium robertianum Helianthemum oelandicum ssp. levigatum Hordelymus europaeus Hornungia petraea Hymenophyllum wilsonii Hyoscyamus niger

Pseudorchis albida Ranunculus arvensis Ribes alpinum Ribes spicatum Rosa agrestis Rumex pseudoalpinus Saxifraga hirculus Saxifraga hypnoides Scandix pecten-veneris Scheuchzeria palustris Sedum villosum Sesleria caerulea Silene gallica Silene noctiflora Sium latifolium Sorbus rupicola Spergula arvensis *Spiranthes spiralis* Stachys arvensis Stellaria palustris Teesdalia nudicaulis Teucrium scordium Thlaspi caerulescens Tilia platyphyllos Utricularia australis Valerianella dentata Vicia orobus Viola tricolor Woodsia ilvensis

Some of these species are long extinct (e.g. *Cypripedium calceolus, Eriophorum gracile, Scheuchzeria palustris, Woodsia ilvensis*) whereas others are relatively common in VC65 (e.g. *Minuartia verna, Primula farinosa, Sesleria caerulea*). We would welcome any recent records for any of these species or up date their distributions.

A much bigger job is our aim to record the flora of the entire county, at the tetrad scale, over the next 20 years. Initially we intend to focus on hectads for which we have very few records. To this end we have planned a series of field trips to various parts of the county during next summer (see below). Please feel free to come along to these meetings or alternatively if you would like to concentrate on specific areas or hectads closer to your home then please feel free to get in touch to see how we can help. We can supply lists of species for each hectad and recording forms.

#### Notable records for 2008

- Alchemilla acutiloba, Wynch Bridge, NW of, NY90.28, 31 May 2008, M.E. Bradshaw et al. First record for VC65.
- Alchemilla glomerulans, Holwick Bridge, Ettersgill, NY98.24, 31 May 2008, M.E. Bradshaw et al.
- Alchemilla glomerulans, Holwick, NY90.27, 1 June 2008, M.E. Bradshaw et al.
- Alchemilla monticola, Hayberries, Romaldkirk, NY99.22, 31 May 2008, M.E. Bradshaw et al.
- Alchemilla subcrenata, Holwick, NY909271, NY90.27, NY907271, 1 June 2008, M.E. Bradshaw et al.
- Alchemilla wichurae, Holwick Bridge, Ettersgill, NY98.24, 31 May 2008, M.E. Bradshaw et al.
- Alchemilla wichurae, Holwick, NY90.27, 1 June 2008, M.E. Bradshaw et al.
- Carex x decolorans (C. nigra × C. bigelowii), Great Shunner Fell, SD84.97, 21 August 2008, R.W.M. Corner & L. Robinson. First record for VC65.
- Carex x fulva (C. viridula subsp. oedocarpa × C. hostiana), Locker Tarn, SE00.91, 24 July 2008, K.J. Walker & C.E. Pinches, det. M. Porter. First confirmed record for VC65 for many years.
- Crepis mollis, Worton Scar, Wensleydale, field below, SD96.89, 3 July 2008, K.J. Walker. First confirmed record for VC65 for many years. Last recorded at this site in 1976.
- Crepis mollis, Wynch Bridge, E of, NY90.27, 14 July 2008, K.J. Walker & L. Robinson.
- Crepis mollis, Holwick, NY90.27, 14 July 2008, K.J. Walker & L. Robinson.
- *Eriophorum latifolium*, Locker Tarn, above, SE00.91, 24 July 2008, K.J. Walker & C.E. Pinches.
- *Pseudorchis albida*, Holwick, NY909273, 13 June 2008, John O'Reilly.
- *Pseudorchis albida*, Marsett Rigg SSSI, SD89.86, 9 July 2008, K.J. Walker.
- Salix x lochsiensis (S. phylicifolia x S. myrsinifolia x S. repens), Tees-bank above Middleton, NY92, 5 June 2008, D.J. Tenant, det. D.J. Tenant & R.D. Meikle. Riverside rocks on basalt, at least one bush. First English and only second British record.

#### Field meetings 2008

- All meetings and courses begin at 10.00am.
- Saturday March 28th *Gagea/Galanthus* day. Meet at Croft-on-Tees Cemetery gates, NZ285094.
- Sunday 12th April *Gagea/Galanthus* day. Meet at Bowlees Visitor Centre Car Park, NY907282.
- Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April *Gagea/Galanthus* day. Meet at Car Park on Tom Croft Hill, SD694913.
- Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May Spring Flora. Meet at beginning of Tees Railway Walk just outside Romaldkirk, NY994216.
- Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May Sedge course with Mike Porter (BSBI Referee). Bainbridge Village Hall. Please book in advance (Linda 01768 881714). £10. Bring packed lunch.
- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June *Hutchinsia* hunt. Meet near the phone box in Snape village, SE266844.
- Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June Muker Meadows. Meet in the car park in Muker, SD911977.
- Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June Meadows and possible *Crepis mollis* hunt. Meet at the cattle grid on Pott Moor High Road, SE143779.
- Saturday  $4^{th}$  & Sunday  $5^{th}$  July joint VC64/65 BSBI Field Meeting
- Saturday 11 July Bowes & Barningham area. Meet Greta Bridge near the Morrit Arms, NZ085132.
- Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July Bowes Moor Pennine Way. Meet near Gilmonby Bridge just outside Bowes, NY996132.
- Saturday August 8<sup>th</sup> Stonesdale Moor. Meet roadside near Stonesdale Bridge, NY884044.
- Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August Hackforth/Crakehall area. Meet Beside the Pub in Little Crakehall, SE242901.
- Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September Arkengarthdale. Meet at Whaw Bridge, NY982044.

#### Our contact details

Linda Robinson, The Cottage, Melmerby, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 1HN. Phone: 01768 881714. Email: lindarobinson157@btinternet.com

Kevin Walker, 97 Dragon Parade, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG1 5DG. Phone: 01423 544902. Email: kevinwalker@bsbi.org.uk