

DERBYSHIRE FLORA PROJECT NEWSLETTER

EDITED: ALAN WILLMOT (County Recorder) & NICK MOYES (Derby Museums)

Number 18 – Winter 2008/2009

1. EDITORIAL (AW)

As usual I have tried to include details of what has been accomplished over the year and what is planned for the coming season. I regret I have little progress to report with the actual Flora but I trust people can see how their records have been of great use both locally and nationally to further the study and conservation of our flora. Please note that there will be no indoor meeting this year but there will be a programme of outdoor meetings, details on last page.

2. RECENT PLANT RECORDS FOR VC 57 (AW)

Cirsium x grandiflorum (A hybrid thistle) After our field meeting of last year in Coombs Dale (in the rain!), Graeme Kay went back to photograph the *Cirsium eriophorum* (Woolly Thistle) and realised that one of the plants was rather odd (SK219741). This turned out to be the hybrid of Spear and Woolly Thistle. According to Graeme, it looked overall like the Woolly Thistle. The heads were cottony but intermediate in size, and the stems were partially winged. It had started flowering before the Woolly Thistle.

Rubus adenanthoides (A bramble) was found by David Earl to be locally abundant along the track above Valehouse Reservoir (SK0379) in Longdendale in August last year. He has several records for this plant on the Cheshire side of the valley but this was

his first from the Derbyshire side, and a first record for the county.

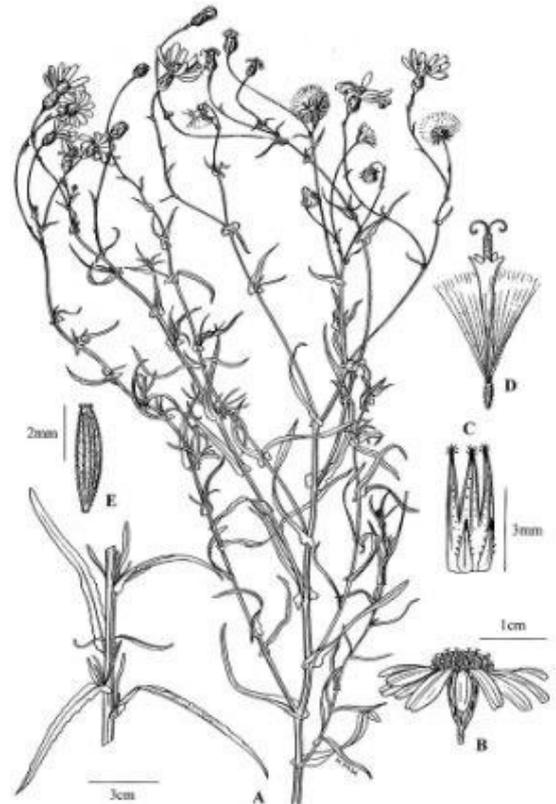


Fig 1 *Senecio inaequidens*

Senecio inaequidens (Narrow-leaved Ragwort) This was found by John & Valerie Middleton by the side of the deviation footpath round the Black Hole Mine below Eyam Edge (SK203774) in October last year. It is an introduced plant which has been spreading recently through England and which I had been expecting to turn up any time. It was a surprise for it to appear in a rural setting rather than one of its more usual urban habitats such as roadsides or waste ground. However, the mine yard is used

as a transport depot for heavy vehicles so the plant probably arrived as seeds on the wheels of a lorry from a more urban area.

Verbena bonariensis (Argentinian Vervain) This was found on one of our outdoor meetings last summer, on another very wet trip to the area of the restored Upper Pleasley colliery site. It was growing in disturbed soil around the old winding gear building (SK499644). It is a common garden plant which may have been a relic of cultivation round the mine. Alternatively it may have been introduced with the material imported to restore the site, much of which was in fact fly tipping.

3. CLOVERS & MEDICKS ON THE A625 (KB)

(Editor's note I asked Ken to produce this note last year and then forgot to include it, so apologies to Ken.) In September 2007 I found many unusual plants growing beside the A625 Sheffield to Hathersage road at its junction with Whitelow Lane (SK286815). The soil had been disturbed by the building of a wall, and material imported to level off the site must have contained seeds of a large number of Medicks (*Medicago*) and Clovers (*Trifolium*). Four species of *Medicago* were identified as *M.arabica* (Spotted Medick), ***M.laciniata*** (Tattered Medick), ***M.minima*** (Bur Medick) and *M.polymorpha* (Toothed Medick). Of the 10 species of *Trifolium* seen the most noteworthy were ***T.glomeratum*** (Clustered Clover), ***T.nigrescens*** (Ball Clover), ***T.resupinatum*** (Reversed Clover), *T.subterraneum* (Subterranean Clover), ***T.suffocatum*** (Suffocated Clover) and ***T.tomentosum*** (Woolly Clover). Other oddities included ***Cardamine raphanifolium*** (Greater Cuckoo-flower) and *Malva parviflora* (Least Mallow). Normally verges like this are grassed over, but so far this has not happened and it is possible that the

seed bank still holds more species that will appear as the ground warms up in springtime, though this is a high altitude site (320 metres) and it may not be worth looking again until June.

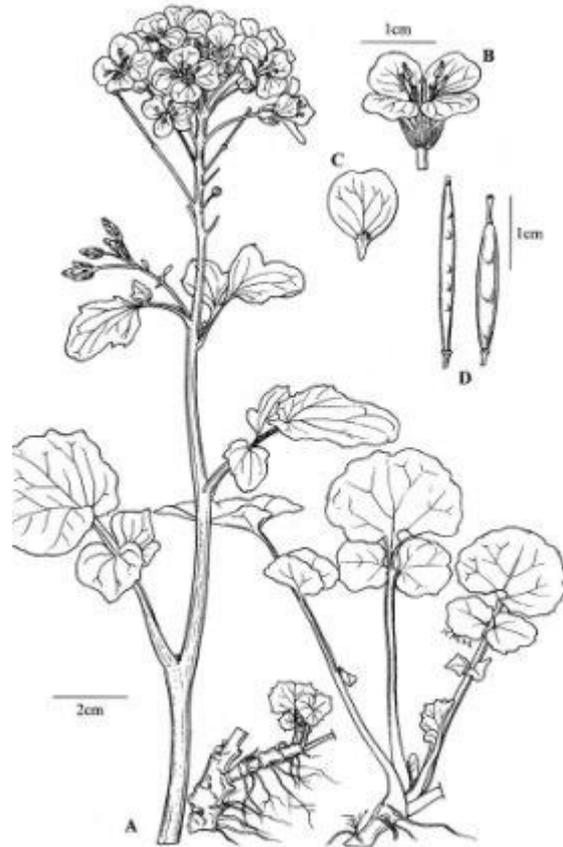


Fig 2 *Cardamine raphanifolium*

Much help with identification came from Yorkshire botanists Michael Wilcox and Jesse Tregale, whilst *T.nigrescens* was confirmed by aliens expert Eric Clement. Those shown in **bold** are new to VC57. Ken Balkow

4. PROGRESS WITH FLORA PROJECT (NM & AW)

Work with the preparation for the publication of a paper-based flora is continuing but progress is slow. Records are still being collected and entered, and those already entered are being checked for accuracy. However, if the records have not yet been used for what they were primarily intended, they have been used in a number of other important ways. Some of these such as the

website and checklist are obvious, others are less so. For example the flora database has been used over the last year to produce the new Red Data List for plants in the county, and has also been used to provide information to the “BSBI Threatened Plants Project”.

5. RED DATA LIST UPDATE (AW)

The last published list of rare and endangered vascular plants in Derbyshire was included in “Endangered Wildlife in Derbyshire” edited by Elkington T & Willmot A and published in 1996. Subsequently a revised list was produced in 2002 by Nick at Derby Museum using the many records collected for the flora. However, it became clear last year that even this was out of date so Nick and I have been working on another to incorporate all the records made for the flora. As before this will include all the Internationally and locally rare and/or protected species in the area. It will also include for the first time plants that have shown a significant local decline.

Local decline is difficult to demonstrate because of the increased recording effort that has been put in over the last few years. In fact we found when we compared the number of sites recorded per species in the eighties and nineties with that recorded in the sixties and seventies, there was an average increase of over 500%. Furthermore virtually no species showed a decrease in number of sites. However, it is clear to most people that many plants have decreased over the last fifty years or so and that this increase is just an aberration of recording. How to demonstrate this with so much extra recording effort was then a problem. We have tried to solve this by using relative change. We argued that any species which failed to increase along with the average increase was in fact showing a

relative decline. We have taken the average change in number of sites per species of 500% increase as a baseline of one (1.0). We then said that any species which showed a change of less than 0.2 (i.e. an increase in sites of less than 100%) had showed a significant relative decline. We think that this is reasonable way to distinguish declining species. Particularly so as those species which have failed to increase along with the average are the rarer plants which people tend to look out for when recording.

The plants which showed the greatest increase in number of recorded sites were the weeds of cultivation such as *Stellaria media* (Common Chickweed) and *Tripleurospermum inodorum* (Scentless Mayweed) that showed increases of over 3000% and 4000% respectively. These were clearly plants that had not been thought worthy of recording before. Common but non-weedy species such as *Acer campestre* (Field Maple), *Calluna vulgaris* (Heather) and *Centaurea nigra* (Common Knapweed) showed average increases in number of sites. Plants that we consider show a significant decline include *Carex pallescens* (Pale Sedge), *Potentilla palustris* (Marsh Cinquefoil) and *Trollius europaeus* (Globe Flower). These were generally rare species to start with, and often plants of unimproved grasslands or moorlands.

Copies of the new red data list of for vascular plants for Derbyshire will be available soon from Derby Museum or the flora website at www.derby.gov.uk/flora .

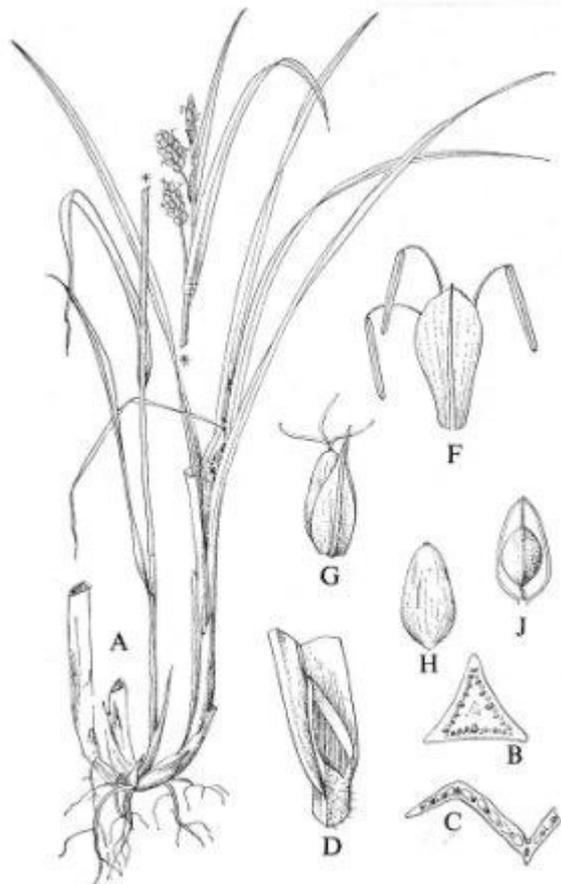


Fig 3 *Carex pallescens* a Red Data List plant with a significant local decline

6. FLORA WEBSITE (NM)

It has not proved possible as yet to significantly increase the number of accounts to view on the website. This is currently being worked on and it is hoped to have at least accounts for all the species on the new red data list available soon. In the meantime all maps are still available on the website and a number of new photographs have been added. Please log in to view the site on www.derby.gov.uk/flora if you have not already done so to see how all your recording effort has been used.

A growing number of photographs have been made available for use in our Flora website. Photographers are submitting their own pictures to a special group on Flickr.com and I am attaching them to our website. To see these photos, or to join and add your own, go to www.flickr.com. You can find our group

pool of photos by typing "Wild Flowers of Derbyshire" in the search box of Flickr. There are currently over 330 photos available, each labelled with species name, locality, date & photographer. We have already "embedded" some of these pictures into our Flora website and welcome more contributions. See me for more details.

7. DERBY MUSEUM HERBARIUM NEWS (AW)

People are probably aware that Derby Museum holds an important herbarium of local plant material dating mostly from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We have not mentioned it much before as there has been relatively little activity with it over the last few years. However, we do try and add specimens to it when new plants are recorded for the county, allowing for conservation concerns. Recently it has been rehoused in purpose made herbarium boxes, and Roy and Ann Branson have produced a computerised database of all the specimens. This will be made available soon via the internet and will allow anyone to easily see what specimens we hold of each species, where they were collected from by whom and when.

8. MEETINGS 2009 (AW)

We have decided not to hold an indoor meeting this spring but I will be organising a series of outdoor meetings as usual on Saturdays through the summer. This year I will be using a number of the meetings to record populations for the BSBI **Threatened Plants Project**. Details of the outdoor programme are attached to this newsletter as the last page.

9. NATIONAL BSBI MATTERS (AW)

The main BSBI project at present is the **Threatened Plants Project (TPP)** that started in 2009 and is set to continue for a number of years yet. The main aim of the project is to survey known sites of endangered species to find out exactly what is happening to them and why. Last year ten species were selected by the BSBI and we were locally asked to survey about six populations of these species. All sites were examined and results submitted. Nationally the response was good and over 700 populations were surveyed. The initial analysis of results show that overall there was a loss of about one third of all populations, with *Campanula patula* and *Scleranthus annuus* colonies surviving least well, and *Blasmus compressus* surviving best.

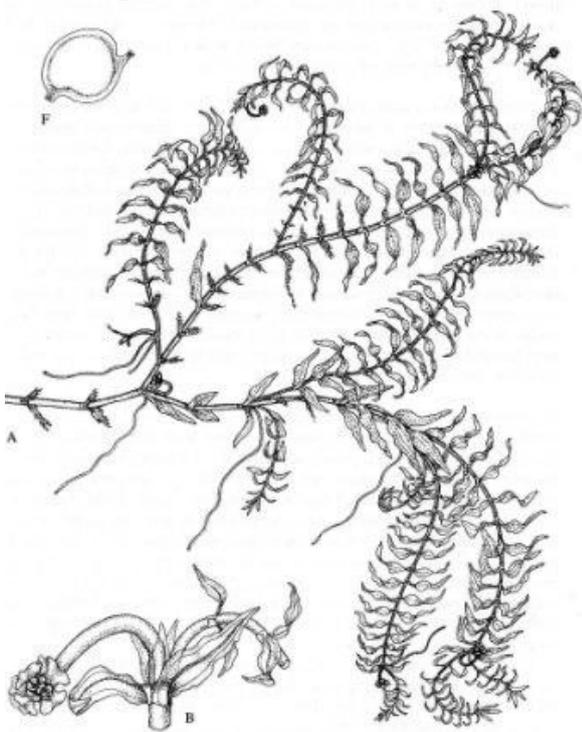


Fig 4 *Groenlandia densa* a new species in the TPP

A further ten species have been selected for working on in 2009. These include six species that occur naturally in Derbyshire. The ten species are, with those that have occurred locally indicated by a (D).

- Carex ericetorum (D)
- Cephalanthera longifolia
- Coeloglossum viride (D)
- Dianthus deltoids (D)
- Fallopia dumetorum
- Gnaphallium sylvaticum (D)
- Groenlandia densa (D)
- Oenanthe fistulosa (D)
- Vicia orobus

I await details of exactly which populations of these the BSBI would like us to survey but in the meantime information about local populations of any of these would be welcome.

10. ENQUIRIES ADDRESSES (AW)

Any enquiry concerning the Flora scheme in general or requests for recording cards can be sent to either of use. Ideally, questions about plant determinations and areas to record should be directed to Alan Willmot. To enquire about computerisation of records, query published records on maps and to request particular up-to-date species maps contact Nick Moyes. Though maps can now be seen on our website.

Our contact details are:

Dr Alan Willmot
2 Kedleston Close Allestree
Derby DE22 2RA

Tel. 01332 550373
E-mail awillmot@waitrose.com

Mr Nick Moyes
Derby Museums and Art Gallery
The Strand Derby DE1 1BS

Tel. 01332 641912 (N.B. New number)
E-mail nick.moyes@derby.gov.uk

DERBYSHIRE FLORA GROUP

OUTDOOR MEETINGS 2009

All meetings are held on Saturdays and start at 10.30 am. They generally last till around 4.30 pm.

DATE	VENUE	MEETING PLACE is:	BOTANICAL INTEREST
May 2nd	Shacklow Woods	Car park on A6 at SK171705	Woodland flora
May 23rd	Markland Grips	Park in lay-by on A616 at SK512754	Magnesian limestone flora particularly <i>Carex ericetorum</i> *
June 6th	Clowne/Elmton area	Car park in central Clowne at SK493756	Magnesian limestone flora possible <i>Ophrys apifera</i> & disused railway land
June 27th	Parsley Hay area	Car park at SK146637	Carboniferous limestone flora with <i>Dianthus deltoides</i> * & <i>Coeloglossum viride</i> *
August 1st	Chesterfield Canal at Staveley	Park Barrow Hill on parking area at SK415753 on main road	Plants of watersides, old railway land & grassland for <i>Silaum silaus</i>
August 15th	Eyam Edge	Park on roadside at SK226780	Plants of roadsides (<i>Gentianella campestris</i> *), moor, marsh & waste ground (<i>Senecio inaequidens</i>)
September 5th	Pewitt Carr & Stanton Lagoon	Park in car park at Straw's Bridge SK453413	Waterside flora
September 19th	Abney Clough	Park on roadside at SK214797	Good gritstone flora including Beech & Oak Ferns

Meetings organised by :

Dr Alan Willmot, 2 Kedleston Close Derby DE22 2RA Tel. 01332 550373.

Mobile phone 0794 121 4977. Please note that this phone is only turned on on morning of meeting.

* Plants to be surveyed for BSBI Threatened Plants Project

Any one interested in botany is welcome to come on these meetings but please contact the organiser if you have not attended one of the events before.

A.Willmot 02.03.2009

Floravc57/Meets09