

Ellen Hutchins

IRELAND'S FIRST FEMALE BOTANIST

BSBI Irish Conference, Dublin, March 24th 2018

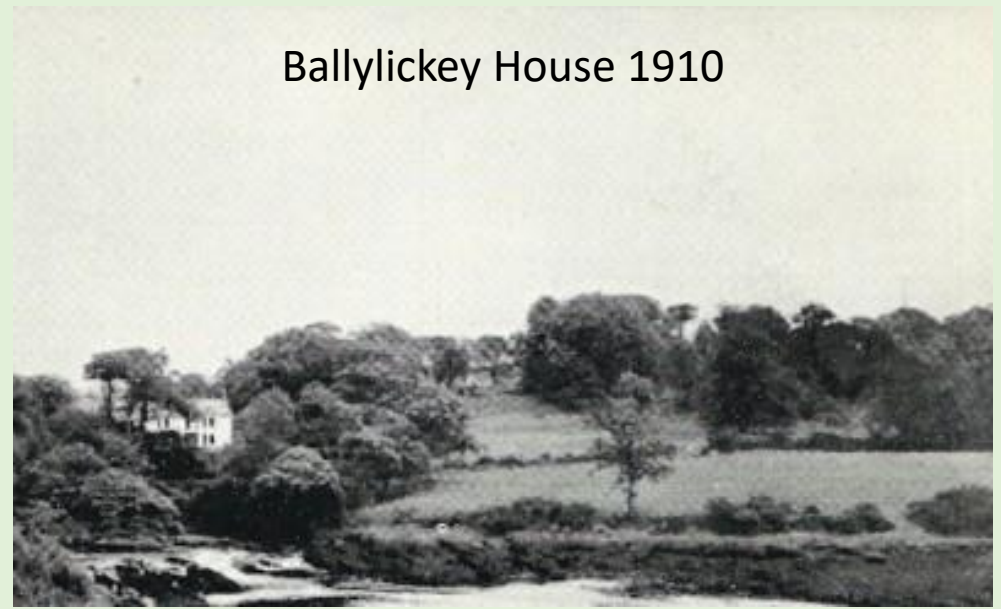
Clare Heardman (VCR H3 – West Cork)

Ellen Hutchins (1785-1815)

- Born: Ballylickey, West Cork.
- Buried: Garryvurcha Graveyard, Bantry, Co Cork
- 2nd youngest of 21 children born to Thomas & Elinor Hutchins
- Widely regarded as Ireland's first female botanist
- Specialised in cryptogams (non-flowering plants) ie bryophytes, lichens and algae.
- Found at least a dozen species new to science which are named after her
- An accomplished botanical artist, producing exquisitely detailed paintings of seaweeds
- A pioneering young woman, who suffered ill health and died just before her 30th birthday



Ballylickey House 1910





Ballylickey Bridge, Bantry.

Co. Cork.



ARDNAGASHEL HOUSE, BANTRY, CO. CORK



ARDNAGASHEL (THE HEIGHT OF THE CASTLE) BANTRY, CO. CORK IRELAND.

Ellen's mentors in Dublin



Dr Whitley Stokes 1763-1845
Portrait by Charles Grey



James Townsend Mackay 1775-1862
Curator, Botanic Gardens, TCD

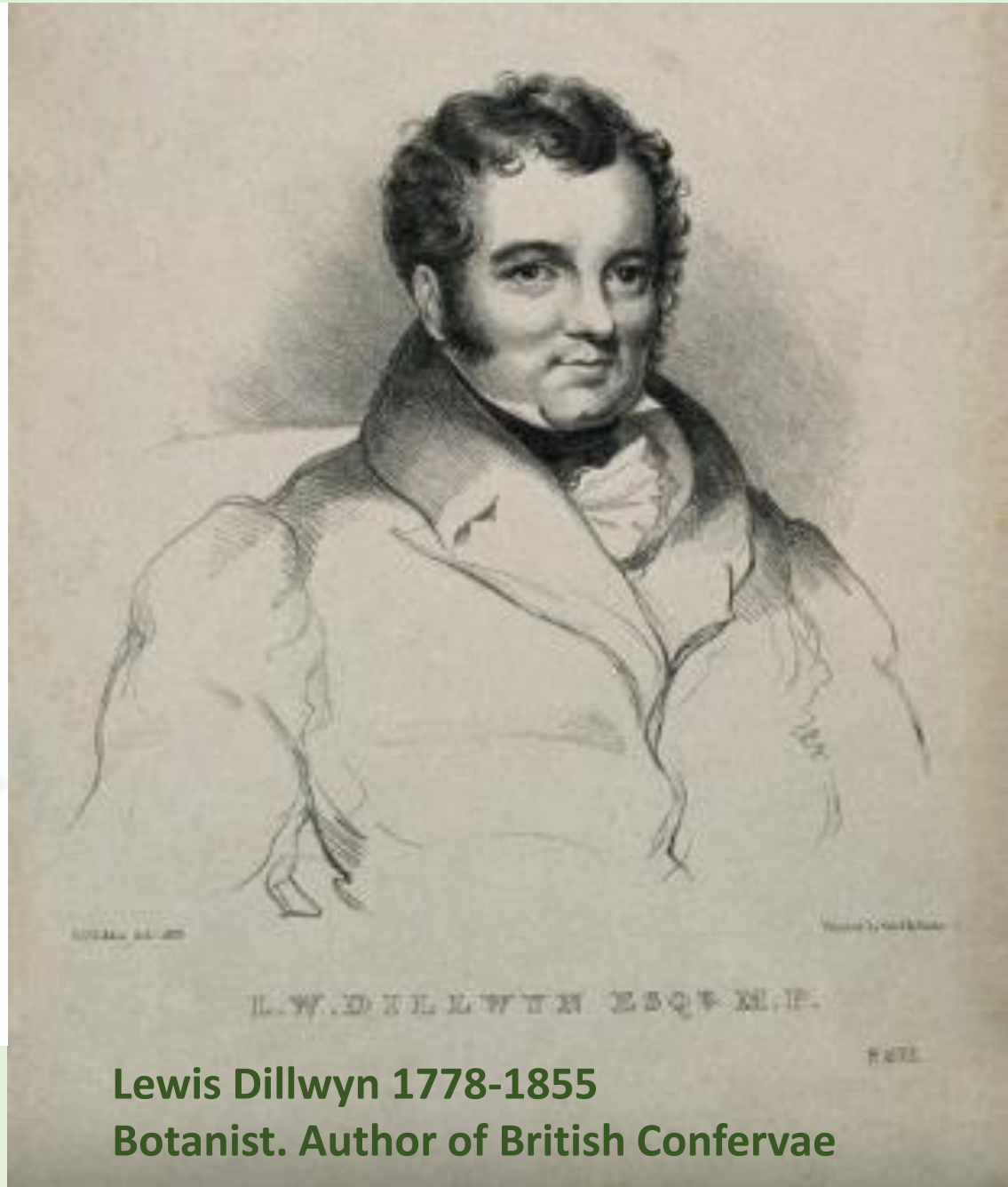
British botanists that Ellen corresponded with and/or who visited her



Dawson Turner 1775-1858
Botanist. Author of *Historium fuci*



William Jackson Hooker 1785-1865
Botanist. Author of *Jungermannia*



Lewis Dillwyn 1778-1855
Botanist. Author of *British Confervae*



'You will no doubt be surprised to see a parcel from me so soon again but as your pleasure in plants equals mine, I could not delay writing with the enclosed minute species of *Conferva*.'

Ellen to Mackay

HERB. N. H. BOT. REG. KEW.



HERBARIUM
LONDON
1857

Callophyllis laciniata var. *reticulata*

HERBARIUM
LONDON
1857



HERBARIUM
LONDON
1857

Callophyllis laciniata
Bantry Bay, Sligo, Hutchins.
1830.

Callophyllis laciniata



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Asplenium platyneuron

Asplenium platyneuron. Kew, April 28th 1857

Tenby College Herbarium
Dulce, Ireland
TC001

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM LONDON
DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY
BM000640722

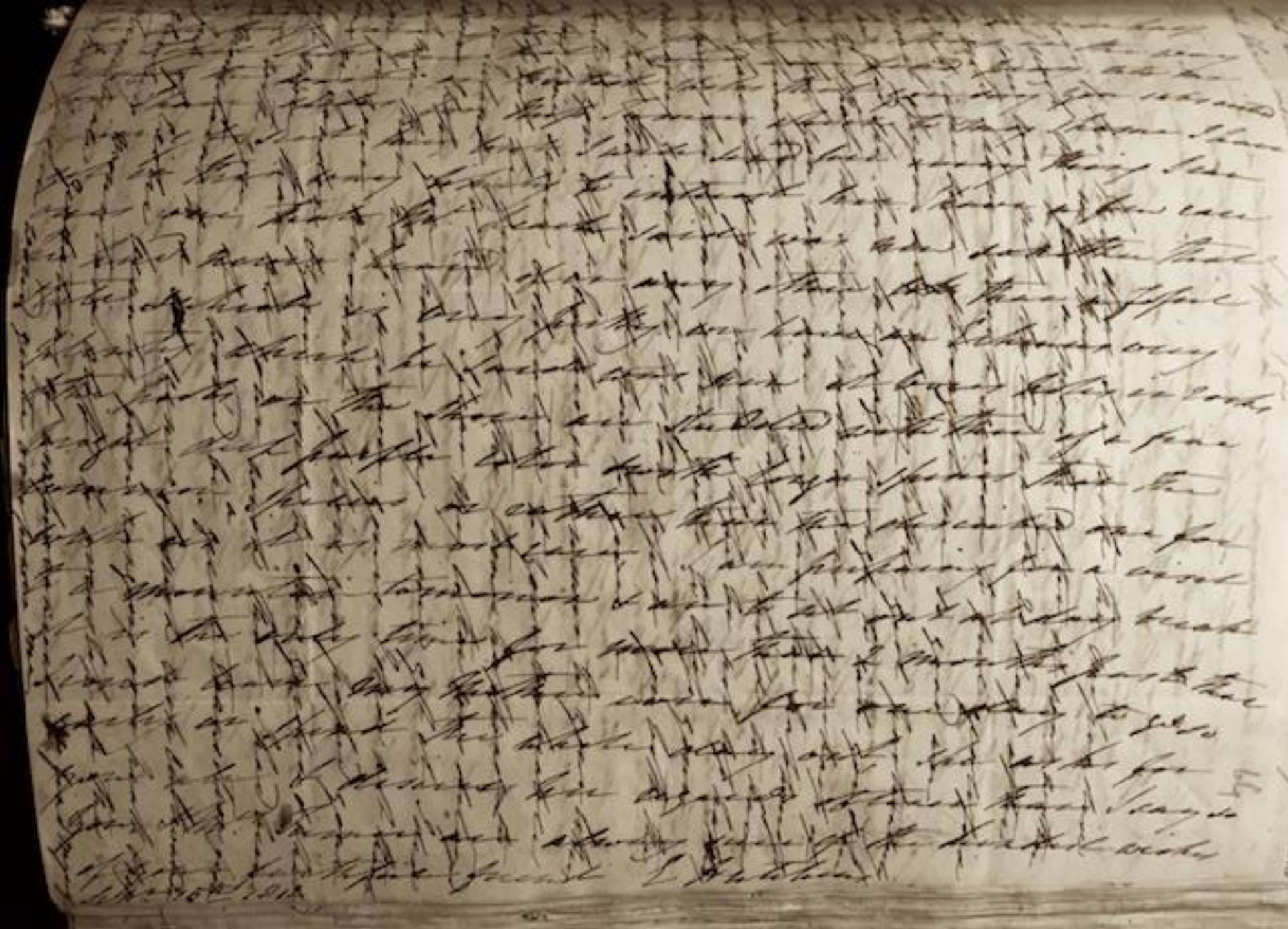
British Museum
from the
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew



HERBARIUM
LONDON
1857

Asplenium platyneuron

Asplenium platyneuron. Bantry Bay, Sligo, Hutchins. 1830.



One of Ellen's
crosshatched
letters

EARLY OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
FLORA OF SOUTHWEST IRELAND

SELECTED LETTERS
OF
ELLEN HUTCHINS AND DAWSON TURNER
1807 — 1814



OCCASIONAL PAPERS

12

NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS
GLASNEVIN
DUBLIN

1999

FLORA HIBERNICA

CONTAINING THE
FLOWERING PLANTS FERNS CHARACEÆ
MUSCI HEPATICÆ LICHENES
AND ALGÆ

OF
IRELAND

ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE NATURAL SYSTEM

WITH A
SYNOPSIS OF THE GENERA

ACCORDING TO THE LINNEAN SYSTEM

BY
JAMES TOWNSEND MACKAY M.R.I.A.

ASSOCIATE OF THE LINNEAN SOCIETY &c. &c.

"Detail the titles
Of vegetable race, from herbs small
That 'er the oak's oak & various things
Of gold and purple, in the honey oak
To enter on the brow of Linnæus,
How industriously varied!"
W. R. Drummond.

DUBLIN

WILLIAM CURRY JUN AND COMPANY

SIMPSON MARSHALL AND CO LONDON

FRASER AND CO EDINBURGH

MDCCLXXVI.

W. H. Harvey, Esq. the well-known Algologist, (before his departure to the Cape of Good Hope,) kindly undertook to describe the Algæ. This he accomplished from the examination of a full collection in my possession, chiefly formed by the late amiable and accomplished Miss Hutchins, a lady who for many years was unremitting in her investigation of the Botany of the south of Ireland. To these he has added his own numerous discoveries, and those of other Botanists, whose names are mentioned; and since his departure I have been fortunate enough to add nine species new to Ireland, communicated by several botanical friends, as will appear in that portion of the work.

Dublin, 10th May, 1836.

<http://www.botanicgardens.ie/herb/books/florahibernica.htm>



Herbertus hutchinsiae with *Polytrichum commune* © Robert Thompson



Jubula hutchinsiae © Robert Thompson



Enterograpta hutchinsiae © Jenny Seawright



Hutchinsia Crystal Carpet



Hornungia

8. HUTCHINSIA Br. (not of Agardh.) Hutchinsia.

Pouch elliptical, entire; the *valves* keeled, without wings; *cells* 2-seeded. *Filaments* simple. *Cotyledons* accumbent (o=). *Br.* — Named in honour of the late *Miss Hutchins*, of Bantry, Ireland, who explored most successfully the Botany of her native country, and added many new species to its Cryptogamia.

1. *H. petraea* Br. (*Rock Hutchinsia*); leaves pinnate entire, petals scarcely longer than the calyx, pouch obtuse at both extremities, stigma sessile. *Ed. Cat.* p. 7. *Lepidium*, *E. Bot.* t. 111.

Limestone rocks, west of England, and as far as Yorkshire. Wall of Eltham church-yard, Kent. *Fl.* March, Apr. ☉. — A small plant, 2—4 inches high.

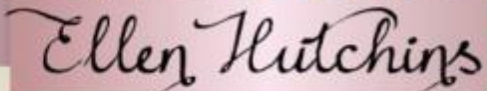
*Extract from:
British Flora
(1842) by William
Jackson Hooker,
First Director of
Royal Botanic
Gardens, Kew.*



Fucus asparagoides 1811

Fucus asparagoides - drawn by Ellen
in 1811 © Hutchins family





Ellen Hutchins

IRELAND'S FIRST FEMALE BOTANIST

FESTIVAL

23RD-30TH AUGUST

BANTRY WHIDDY GLENGARRIFF BALLYLICKEY COOMHOLA
WALKS TALKS BOAT TRIP EXHIBITIONS

A festival to celebrate the life & work of Ellen Hutchins born in Ballylickey in 1785, she died 200 years ago in 1815. In her short life she made a major contribution to scientific knowledge.

All events are free

For full event details & booking see: www.ellenhutchins.com

*Organised by Bantry Historical Society, National Parks & Wildlife Service and members of the Hutchins family.
Funding provided by The Heritage Council, Cork County Council and local organisations.*



Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chiarraí

Programme of events

Sunday 23rd August

10:30 KNOCKBOY (CNOC BUI) - WALK

*Botanical trip with Dr Rory Hodd
(booking required)*

Monday 24th August

14:00 GLENGARRIFF NATURE RESERVE
- CHILDREN'S EVENT

*Nature walk & willow weaving for children
(booking required)*

Thursday 27th August

18:45 GARRYVURCHA GRAVEYARD,
BANTRY

*Unveiling of plaque to commemorate
Ellen Hutchins' contribution to science*

20:00 BANTRY LIBRARY - TALK

*Ellen Hutchins: Her Life and Story
by Madeline Hutchins*

Friday 28th August

11:00 - BALLYLICKEY - WALK

*Ellen's birthplace & home - a walk
around Ballylickey. Meet Ouveane Falls*

14:00 - ARDNAGASHEL ESTATE - WALK

*Ardnagasbel & the Hutchins' Arboretum with the
Hutchins family. Meet Rent an Irish Cottage*

20:00 - TALK IN PARK HOTEL,
GLENGARRIFF

*What the Eye Can See - Ellen's botanical achievements
by Donal Synnott*

Saturday 29th August

11:30 BOAT TRIP TO WHIDDY ISLAND

*A marine tour of inner Bantry Bay via Ardnagasbel
(booking required)*

14:30 WHIDDY ISLAND WALK

Ferries leave Bantry Pier at 13:00 & 14:00
*A botanical walk with Dr Micheline
Sheehy-Skeffington*

18:00 ART IN BANTRY HOUSE

*Botanical art demonstration by Shevaun Doherty
and official opening of Ellen Hutchins: Botanical
Drawings exhibition*

Sunday 30th August

11:00 ARDNAGASHEL SHORE WALK

*Seaweeds and lichens with Dr Howard Fox &
Maria Cullen*

15:00 - GLENGARRIFF WOODS NATURE
RESERVE - WALK

*'Flora, then & now' woodland walk with
Dr Fionnuala O'Neill*

There are two exhibitions running throughout
the festival.

*Ellen Hutchins, Botanist: The Young Woman, her
Work and her World in Bantry Library from Tuesday
18th August until Tuesday 1st September*

*Ellen Hutchins: Botanical Drawings in Bantry
House from Thursday 20th August until
Saturday 5th September
Normal entrance fee to Bantry House applies*

All events are free

For full event details & booking see: www.ellenhutchins.com



Green seaweed specimen © The Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London





Natural History Pioneer

Ellen Hutchins was genuinely a pioneer in the collection and study of seaweeds, at the start of the exploration of 'this most difficult branch of botany'. Her botanising covered other non-flowering plants (cryptogams): lichens, mosses and liverworts. She made significant discoveries and had plants named after her in all of these 'tribes' as she called them.

She sent specimens and drawings of her plants to the leading cryptogamic botanists of the day. They published her finds and were highly appreciative of her work. There was a strong sense of collaboration, and a reliance by those who published on those who collected.

Ellen was very much the right person, in the right place, at the right time.

Ellen enjoyed botanising and was highly motivated as she gained a sense of usefulness and purpose, as well as connection to others and communities from it. She was determined and curious, and out in the field work needed. She was highly skilled at identification. Her decisions are detailed and precise. Her specimens are meticulously and carefully annotated.

West Cork, including the Bantry Bay area, had previously been neglected by the botanical community. It was remote, unknown. To visit it and around it was difficult. As so few botanists had visited Bantry Bay, and because of the rich array of plants growing there, it was mistily seen by Ellen, with her enthusiasm, determination, and increasingly specialist knowledge of the non-flowering plants to find new species.

It is now known that West Cork has a unique flora, with a number of so-called Lusitanian species that occur almost exclusively in south-west Ireland, north-west Spain and northern Portugal e.g. St Patrick's Cabbage (*Saxifraga spatulata*) and Large-flowered Butterwort (*Pinguicula grandiflora*).

Ellen was a significant member of the community of cryptogamic botanists of her day.



Asplenium adnigrum in The Cork Botanical Garden, Cork, Ireland



Asplenium adnigrum (Plant Label)

Asplenium adnigrum (Plant Label) - *Asplenium adnigrum* (Plant Label) - *Asplenium adnigrum* (Plant Label)

Shells

As was often the case in Natural History, individuals specialised in a number of different areas. Ellen, and many of her fellow botanists, were also shell collectors (conchologists). Ellen is known to have found at least two new species of shells.

"Though you observe the shells and see it not to shells in nature, we have many species which are not the least and not in a very perfect state. Perhaps you may find a better variety."

Letter to James Deane, Cork, Ireland, 1847

Cork shell (small), a type of weather signal was designed from Bantry Bay to use as a marker on the tides.



Asplenium adnigrum (Plant Label) - *Asplenium adnigrum* (Plant Label) - *Asplenium adnigrum* (Plant Label)

Asplenium adnigrum (Plant Label) - *Asplenium adnigrum* (Plant Label) - *Asplenium adnigrum* (Plant Label)

Discovers and Type Specimens

Ellen discovered a considerable number of species new to science. The specimens used for the first published description of the new species is kept and called the Type Specimen or Type Material, and these are used for botanical research and identification purposes. A recent search by the Natural History Museum, London turned up at least seventeen Type Specimens of species found by Ellen Hutchins in Bantry Bay over her hundred year span.

Plants called Hutchinsiae

There is a significant list of plants named after Ellen Hutchins, with the dedications made by some of the biggest 'names' in botany.

Lewis Dillwyn (1770-1866) named *Cladonia Hutchinsiae* after her. He wrote in his British Conference that he knew 'few, if any botanists, whose zeal and success in the pursuit of natural history better deserve such a commendation'. Another seaweed, *Cladonia Hutchinsiae* was named after her by William Henry Harvey (1811-1893) who was curator of Trinity College, Dublin's herbarium. To her the nature of Ireland is under many obligations. ... It was particularly fortunate in directing new and beautiful objects, several of which remain the great objects in the collection.

William Jackson Hooker dedicated the first plate (leaving) in his book *British Jungermanniae* (1810-1816) to a plant he named after her, *Jungermannia (Jungermannia) Hutchinsiae* - Hutchins Hollowed, and it is here in the introduction it affords me of dedicating that species, one of the most beautiful which I am acquainted with to discover Mrs Hutchins, of Ballyvaughan, near Bantry, in her own island because of the most rare and interesting species which will be described.

Asplenium adnigrum was found by Ellen in 1810 but identified by Hooker as *Jungermannia Hutchinsiae*. It was not described to a species name level and named for her, until 1917 by Noel A. W. Evans.

Dr James Edward Smith (1769-1820), founder of the Linnæan Society, named the moss *Hutchinsia Procumbens* *Hutchinsiae* after her, saying 'in tribute to her numerous discoveries in the natural history department of Bantry particularly her contributions to the specific names'.

William Sowerby (1750-1820), an English ichthyologist, mostly handled her lichen finds. Three of the lichens she discovered are named after her: *Lecanora Hutchinsiae*, *Thelotrema Hutchinsiae* and *Cladonia Hutchinsiae*.

Cladonia Hutchinsiae was named by the eminent botanist and microscopist Robert Brown (1773-1820) and Ellen thanked Turner 'for the specimen of the new genus *Mytilina* for which she had the honour to name after me.' (1810-1811) In November 1810. Although technically renamed, this plant is known as *Hutchinsia* on garden centre labels in the UK.

Ellen discovered Bantry Nettwort (*Utricularia Hutchinsiae*) having not been seen for more than 100 years in Co. Cork, this species was recently rediscovered by Irish biologist Dr Rory Hood in a remote gully in the Comer Mountains.

Pioneer: first to study a subject, one who opens up new areas of research, someone who explores new territory.



Asplenium adnigrum (Plant Label) - *Asplenium adnigrum* (Plant Label)

Asplenium adnigrum (Plant Label) - *Asplenium adnigrum* (Plant Label)



The flora of Bantry Bay

Ellen was asked by Turner in 1809 if she would prepare 'a complete catalogue of the plants of all kinds that you have found in your neighbourhood' for the Linnæan Society of London. Her list has - not completed until 1812 - ran to over 1100 species.

James Maclean (1774-1862) drew on her list for his *Flores Hiberniae* (1846), the first complete flora of Ireland. The *Shannon Island Marine Station* publication, *The Wild Plants of Bantry, County Wexford and other Adjacent Bantres* (2013) includes Ellen's story, and is the first comprehensive list of plants on Wexford Island since hers.

For further information and resources see www.ellenhutchins.com



Natural History Pioneer



Ellen Hutchins

1785 - 1815

Cryptogamic Botany

Coastal Flora & Fauna

•

Birthplace and Home of
ELLEN HUTCHINS
1785 – 1815.
Ireland's First Female Botanist.







Dwarf Willow *Salix herbacea* © Clare Heardman



Stag's-horn Clubmoss *Lycopodium clavatum* © Clare Heardman





Dwarf Elder *Sambucus ebulus* © Clare Heardman

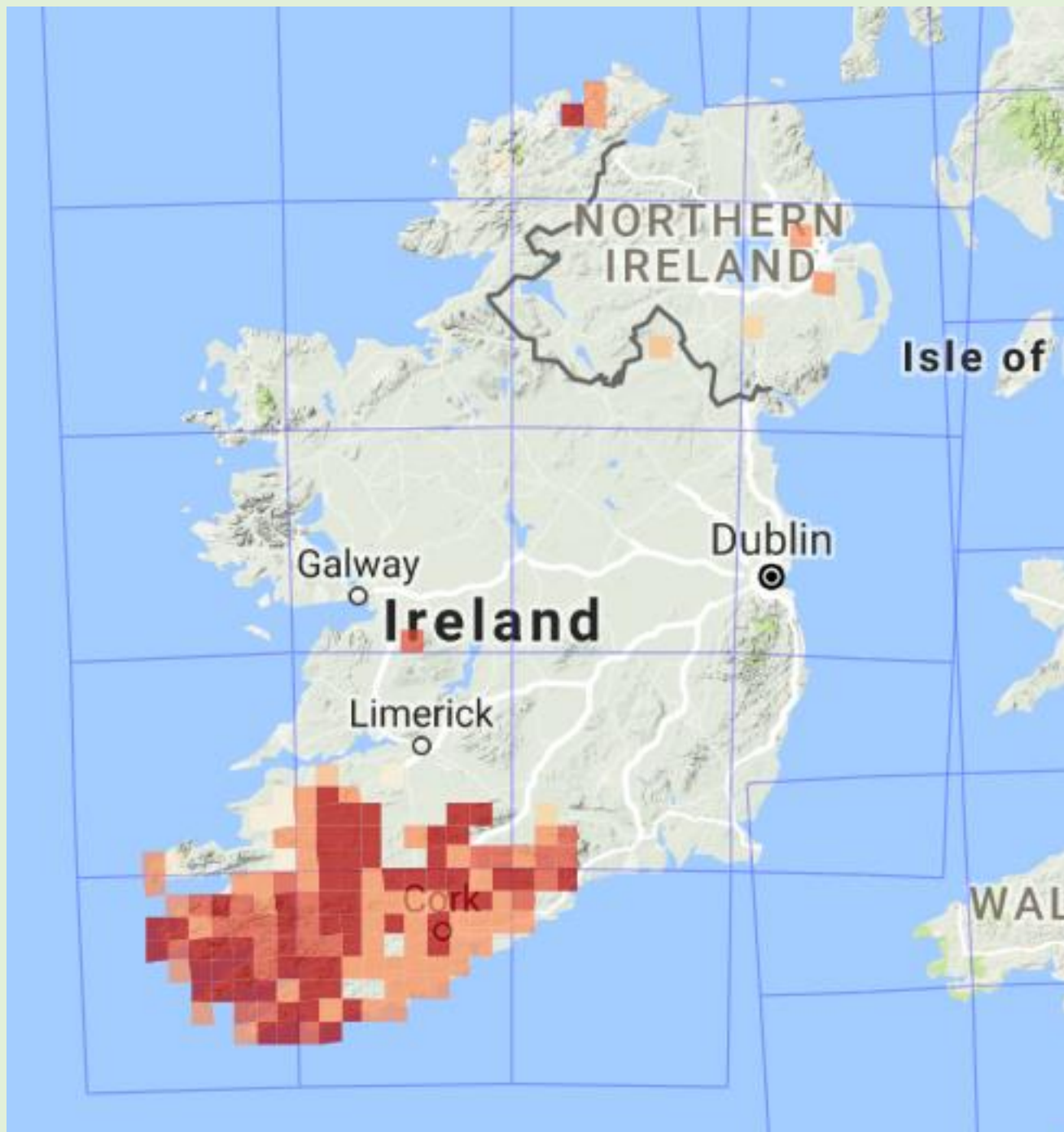


Common Calamint
(Clinopodium ascendens)



BSBI Distribution Map

Irish Spurge
(*Euphorbia hyberna*)





Recurved Sandwort (*Minuartia recurva*) © Clare Heardman



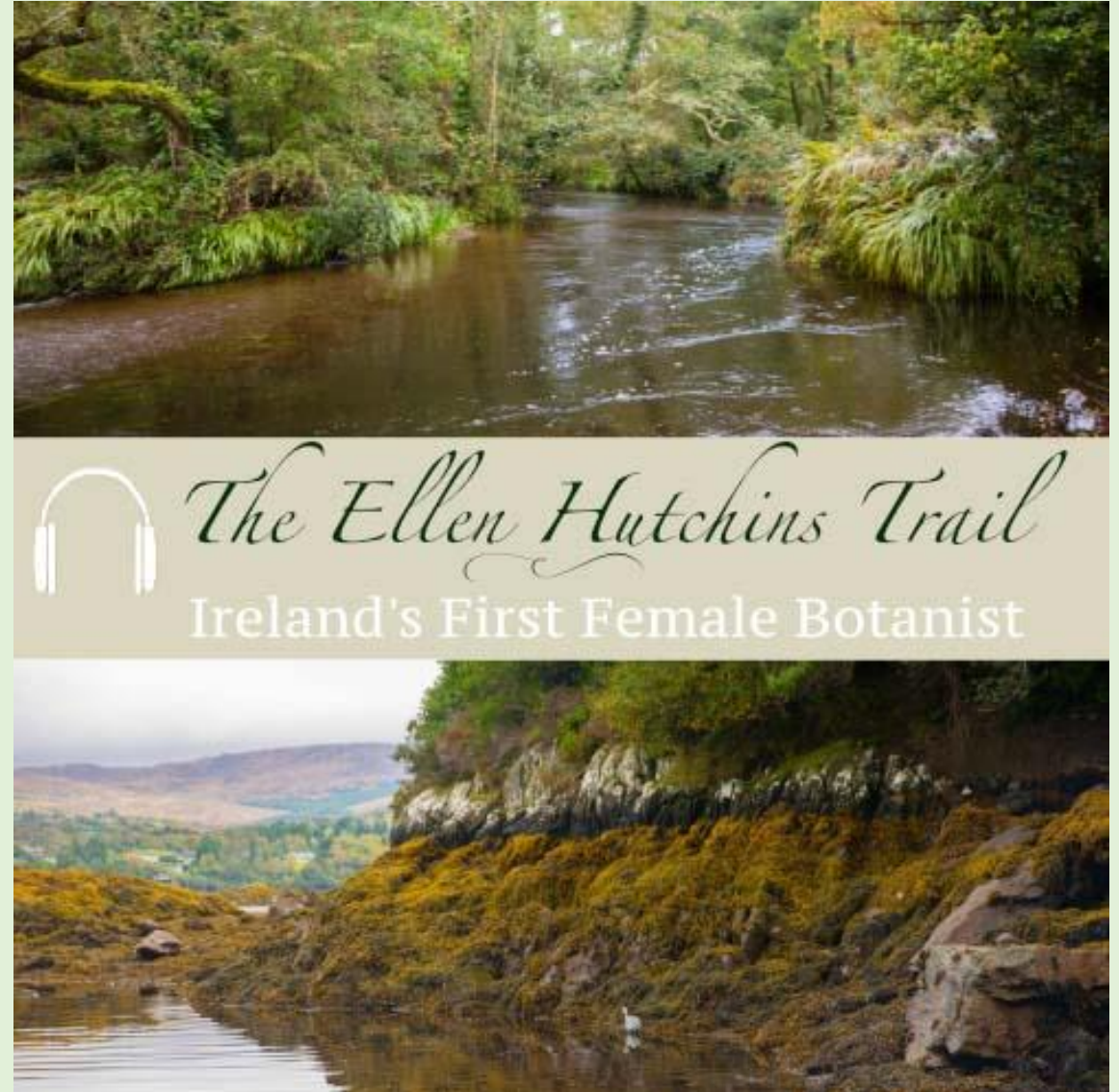
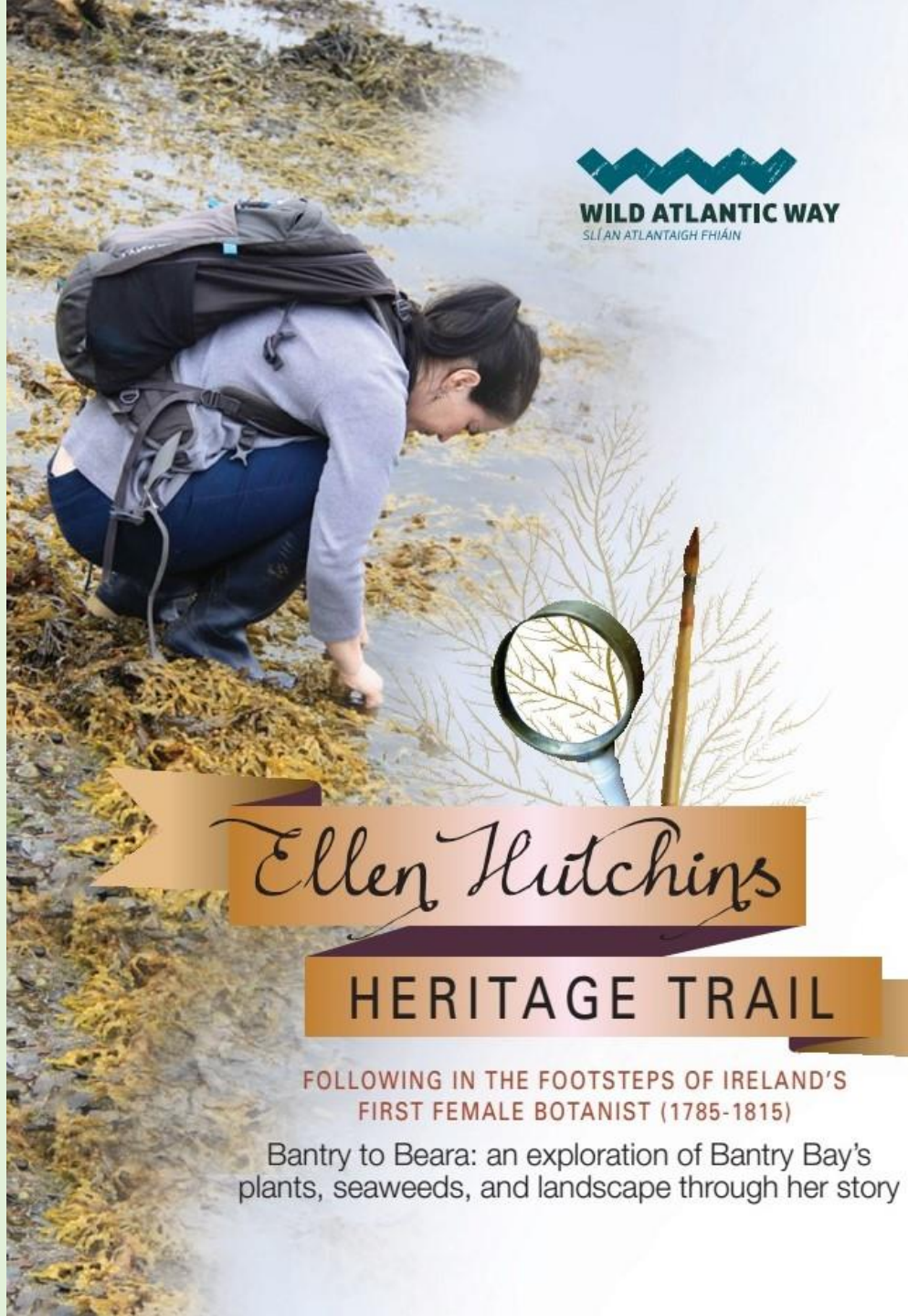
Narrow-leaved Helleborine (*Cephalanthera longifolia*)
© Clare Heardman



Cerastium cerastoides © Wiki Commons



Ellen Hutchins Heritage Trail – leaflet & audio guide.
Available via www.ellenhutchins.com



9 Hungry Hill and Healy Pass



When her health was good, Ellen delighted in "going among the mountains". We know that she climbed Sugar Loaf and Hungry Hill on the Bann Peninsula and was willing to go to great lengths to find specific plants.

Ellen clearly derived great pleasure from being active, and being useful by finding things for her botanist friends. She wrote to Dawson Turner: "If I can do any thing for you pray tell me. Working for oneself is very dull, but to do any thing for another person gives one spirit to proceed."

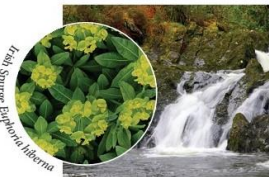
In Ellen's day, the most common way to travel down the peninsula was by boat as the roads were extremely rough. Either way, getting to Hungry Hill would have been a major expedition for Ellen.

At its summit, Ellen would have found the ancient cairn which is still there to this day. At its eastern side are two lakes, both of which drain into the Mare's Tail waterfall - the highest waterfall in both Ireland and the UK.

Some of the plants Ellen recorded on Hungry Hill can still be found near the summit today, including Crowberry, Harebell, the arctic-alpine plant Stiff Sedge and cliff-specialist Roseroot. The site is part of Hungry Hill Bog Natural Heritage Area.

For experienced hillwalkers, it's a tough 6km climb up Hungry Hill from the top of the Healy Pass. The less adventurous can simply enjoy the stunning views from the road.

8 Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve



Glengarriff Woods is a 300ha nature reserve with several great hiking trails through one of the best examples of oceanic oak woodland in Ireland. The setting of the reserve is spectacular, nestled in a sheltered glen opening out into beautiful Glengarriff Harbour. Above the woods

rise the Caha Mountains, with their dramatic exposed layers of old red sandstone.

The woods were part of the Bantry House estate during Ellen's time. It was a special place to her and she refers to finding unusual bryophytes in "a very favourite spot by the rocky, woody side of a little waterfall particularly dear to me". Hutchins' Hollywort, one of the liverworts named after her, occurs here.

Among the flowering plants Ellen found are some so-called Lusitanian species, unique to south western Ireland and the north western Iberian



Peninsula eg St Patrick's Cabbage, Kidney Saxifrage and Irish Spurge. As with the mosses, lichens and ferns blanketing the trees, they thrive in West Cork's mild, damp climate.

One shrub growing in the woods now that was not present during Ellen's lifetime is *Rhododendron ponticum*. Introduced in the mid to late 1800s, it has become an invasive pest that National Parks & Wildlife Service is working to control on an ongoing basis.



The Priest's Leap is a steep and winding road which passes just below the summit of County Cork's highest mountain, Knockboy (Cnoc Bu). Lewis Dillwyn who visited Ellen in 1809 wrote: "The prospect from its summit is very grand & extensive. To the southward the smooth and glassy surface of Bantry Bay with its numerous creeks & inlets formed a fine contrast to the dark line of its surrounding mountains, & a large tract of country with the Atlantic Ocean beyond as if spread in a map beneath us."

Ellen had a great appreciation of beauty, both in the countryside around her and in the plants she collected and viewed through her microscope. She wrote of "treasures" and "exquisite little beauties".

4 Ballylickey



A plaque on a small gate pillar by the public road near the bridge over the Ouveena River commemorates Ballylickey House as Ellen's birthplace and home. The Hutchins family lived here for at least four generations until 1921. The house was destroyed by fire in 1976 but was rebuilt to its earlier Georgian proportions. The property remains in private ownership and is not open to the public.

Ellen was the second youngest of twenty-one children, but only six of the children survived to adulthood. Her father died when she was two, and her only sister died two years later, leaving Ellen with a widowed mother and four brothers. By the age of twenty, in 1805, Ellen was home in Ballylickey, caring for her mother who was by now elderly and ill, and helping look after her brother Tom, who had a "paralytic

condition and had lost the use of his limbs".

In 1805, James Mackay, botanist at Trinity, visited Ellen in Ballylickey and suggested that she look at seaweeds. Ellen was delighted to have found someone who shared her "passion for plants", and who had asked for her help. She soon sent specimens to him of new discoveries she was making: in seaweeds, mosses and other plants.

We know that Ellen had a glasshouse and loved gardening. Mackay sent her rare plants and seeds for her garden, often with growing instructions.

Ellen's caring responsibilities were considerable and there were family "troubles" too. Both botany and her immediate surroundings provided solace to her. She wrote of walking out "to enjoy in silence and solitude the delightful softness of the night either by the seashore or by the river. Here I recover my spirits or rather become calm after the agitations of the day."

6 Coomhola



Large-flowered Butterwort *Pinguicula grandiflora*

Ellen was fortunate to have the lovely Coomhola area nearby. Part of the Beara Way, the Coorycommone Loop Walk provides a wonderful opportunity to follow in Ellen's footsteps and discover this special place for yourself. The walk starts near Coomhola Bridge and passes through beautiful woodland, before opening out onto heath and blanket bog. The trail returns to the Coomhola Bridge downhill through forestry and along a quiet breen.

Be sure to look out for Large-flowered Butterwort, one of Ireland's few insect-eating plants, which Ellen once described as "a most beautiful plant and

great ornament to marshy places in spring". The plant is typical of West Cork's wetlands and is only found in south west Ireland and the north western part of the Iberian Peninsula. Also present here are two much less conspicuous insectivorous plants, Pale Butterwort and Round-leaved Sundew.

Along the route, in clear weather, there are fantastic 360° views covering much of the area that Ellen explored. County Cork's highest mountain, Knockboy, can be seen to the north, Glengarriff and the Caha Mountains to the west and Bantry Bay and Whiddy Island to the south.

Along the closest shoreline, the long stretch of woodland is Ardnagashel Estate, where Ellen's brothers, Arthur, and later Samuel, established an arboretum. This included a series of exotic trees that came from Kew Gardens, London through Ellen's botanical connections.

5 Snave Beach



Alicia, *Columpasium forcolumatum* growing on barnacles

Along the coast north-west of Ballylickey sits a little gravel beach where the impressive Coomhola River enters Bantry Bay at Snave Bridge. Ellen collected seaweed and shell specimens along this shore. Ellen is known to have identified at least two new species of shell including the wing shell (*Pteria hirundo*).

In Ellen's time "coral sand" also called maeri was dredged from Bantry Bay and used as a soil improver. Ellen found many interesting shells mixed in with it. Maeri is actually a type of coralline algae and is still dredged from the bay today.

Snave townland lies between Ballylickey and Ardnagashel. In 1813 Ellen and her mother moved from Ballylickey to an Inn at Bandon. Ellen wrote that this was "for better medical attention" but her cousin, Thomas Taylor wrote that Ellen's eldest brother had thrown her and her mother out of the house at Ballylickey. Ellen's two older brothers, Emanuel and Arthur, were for years in disputes with each other over property. These caused Ellen considerable anxiety, heartache and anger.

Ellen spent her final months at Ardnagashel House, along the wooded shore west of Snave Bridge, living with Arthur and his wife Matilda. Ellen moved there after her stay in Bandon, where her mother died. Ellen herself was seriously ill, suffering from a liver complaint which was being treated by her doctor with mercury. Ellen died at Ardnagashel on 9th February 1815.

1 Garryvurcha Graveyard, Bantry



Ellen Hutchins was born in Ballylickey on the shores of Bantry Bay in 1785 and lived there for most of her life. She suffered from bouts of ill health throughout her short life and died just before her thirtieth birthday in February 1815. She is buried here in Garryvurcha Graveyard in an unmarked grave.

A plaque was erected in August 2015, 200 years after her death, during the first Ellen Hutchins Festival. Ellen is described as a natural history pioneer in cryptogamic botany and coastal flora and fauna.

Cryptogamic means the non-flowering plants - seaweeds, lichens, mosses and liverworts. Ellen specialised in these and her work on seaweeds is particularly significant. They were little understood at the time, and her work was indeed pioneering. Fauna is included in the wording because Ellen also studied seashells.

Ellen left a significant legacy to botany, and her name lives on in many species that she found new to science and which were named after her by leading botanists of her day eg Hutchins' Pincushion (*Ulota hutchinsiae*) and Hutchins' Hollywort (*Jubula hutchinsiae*). Her beautifully prepared specimens (dried plants on paper), with "Miss Hutchins Bantry Bay" handwritten on them, are held in herbaria (libraries of specimens) across the world, and are still used for identification and research by botanists.



Ulota hutchinsiae (Gottsch.) and *Jubula hutchinsiae* (Gottsch.)

2 Blue Hill and Beach, Bantry



Ellen found an impressive 1,100 species of flowering plants, mosses, liverworts, lichens and seaweeds around Bantry Bay. The shoreline near Blue Hill is one of the spots she favoured in her search for marine plants, and it also provides wonderful views across most of her plant hunting area.

Blue Hill is a drumlin that was formed thousands of years ago by the movement of glacial ice sheets across the landscape. On the beach, you will see a huge variety of stones of various rock types which were brought here from

many miles away and deposited when the ice sheets melted.

In the upper inter-tidal zone, are seaweeds such as Bladder Wrack and Channelled Wrack, of which Ellen wrote: "It is so common a plant in this country that the shore is as yellow with it as the land is with Furze." As the tide drops, other seaweeds such as kelp can be seen.

Lichens on the coastal rocks, include the distinctive yellow *Xanthoria parietina*. Flowering plants recorded by Ellen which can be seen in this area today include Bittersweet, Kidney Vetch and the low-growing shrub, Creeping Willow.

For a short stroll, head along the shore parallel to a little-used air strip. This is a popular walk for locals.

3 Whiddy Island



The seashore of Whiddy was where Ellen found many seaweeds new to science. She would head off in a small boat from Ballylickey, sometimes with a young servant girl or boy to help her over the rocks with her boxes and basket. Back at home, Ellen made detailed and accurate watercolour drawings of the seaweeds to show how they looked "when fresh".

The island's climate, like other parts of south west Cork, is influenced by the Gulf Stream, creating a unique ecology. When the renowned Welsh seaweed botanist, Lewis Dillwyn visited Ellen

and her family in 1809, he was taken out to Whiddy. He described Bantry Bay as "perhaps the best garden in the world for the marine algae [seaweeds], and they there grow in deep pools secure from the ravages of every storm, and attain an enormous size".

Fuchsia brings rich colour to the island's hedgerows, but although now a symbol of West Cork, Ellen did not find it here 200 years ago. This South American species only became a popular hedging plant in later times. Other flowering plants that Ellen recorded on the island include Dwarf Elder, Restharrow and Wild Radish.

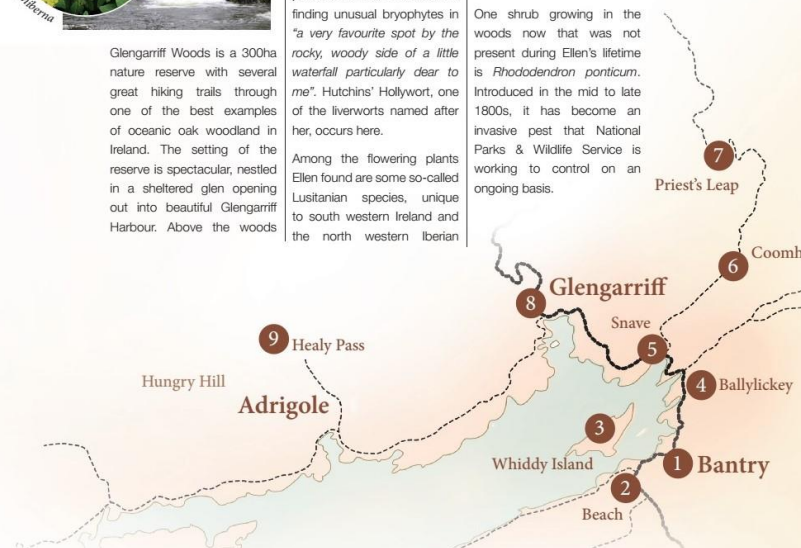
There are several way-marked trails on Whiddy, including one to a fortified battery built during Ellen's lifetime following the failed attempted invasion by Wolfe Tone and the French Armada in 1796.

7 Priest's Leap



The Priest's Leap is a steep and winding road which passes just below the summit of County Cork's highest mountain, Knockboy (Cnoc Bu). Lewis Dillwyn who visited Ellen in 1809 wrote: "The prospect from its summit is very grand & extensive. To the southward the smooth and glassy surface of Bantry Bay with its numerous creeks & inlets formed a fine contrast to the dark line of its surrounding mountains, & a large tract of country with the Atlantic Ocean beyond as if spread in a map beneath us."

Ellen had a great appreciation of beauty, both in the countryside around her and in the plants she collected and viewed through her microscope. She wrote of "treasures" and "exquisite little beauties".



Should the new supercomputer be called



This website has lots of information about Ellen Hutchins' life and work which will be of help to any school student interested in casting a vote in this competition.

[information for primary school students](#)

[information for secondary school students](#)



www.ellenhutchins.com

<https://botanistellen.wixsite.com/mysite>

Ellen Hutchins Festival 2018 : 18th-26th August