



English Botanical News

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Thalictrum minus (Lesser Meadow-rue) in limestone pavement at the Malham Tarn ASM

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Osumunda regalis (Royal Fern), Ballaugh Curragh, Isle of Man

Welcome from the President: Lynne Farrell



Lynne Farrell at Rydal Hall gardens, Cumbria

This is the first BSBI England Newsletter sent to you at a time when reading is an important part of our daily lives. Little did we know when the Committee for England was set up in 2019 what would lie ahead in 2020. However, botany is a long-term study, and an interest in plants is the common thread which brings our members together.

This newsletter sets out the background to the formation of the Committee for England and its present role, so it contains some of the business elements. The reports from VCRs mirrors the Irish, Scottish and Welsh newsletters, so completing our BSBI remit. Sections on botany are also included, as you would expect and look forward to reading and learning from.

I hope you enjoy perusing this edition, and I think the editor would be pleased to receive useful comments and contributions for future consideration.

Lynne Farrell, President

Introduction from the Chair: Jonathan Shanklin



Jonathan Shanklin making himself visible at a local meeting in Cambridge

Little did I know that when I took on the role of chair of the Committee for England, I would also be its first secretary and newsletter editor. I now know just how much work goes into the task of producing the companion newsletters of the other countries and I hope that you enjoy dipping in to this one.

My botanical career began when I was encouraged by my mother to compile a book of pressed flowers, mostly from my home town of Wrexham, when aged six. Several books still exist and it was possible to put records from them into the DDb. After primary school there was a long gap in botanical recording, whilst I studied at King's School Chester, then Magdalene College at Cambridge University where I read Natural Sciences, specialising in Physics. My degree took me to the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge, the discovery of the Antarctic ozone hole and many trips to the Antarctic. It wasn't until after the Cambridge Natural History Society asked me to be their President that botanical interests resurfaced and the rest as they say is history.

Introduction from the England Field Meetings Secretary: Mary Dean

As Jonathan Shanklin mentions in his Annual Report for 2019 from the Hon Field Meetings Secretary (page 14), I have taken on the new role as England Field Meetings Secretary.



Mary Dean amongst Carex nigra (Common Sedge) at Ainsdale LNR on the Sefton coast. (Rod Hill)

A bit about me: I'm from Lancashire and live on North Merseyside (v.c.59, South Lancashire). I'm lucky to have the wonderful Sefton coast nearby for botanical excursions. As a relative beginner to botany, I joined BSBI in 1999 when I started studying for a PhD at Edge Hill University and BSBI was recommended to me by my supervisor Professor Paul Ashton. What an excellent recommendation. I have met many lovely botanists over the last 20 years, often on field meetings, made new friends, learned so much about botany from the many knowledgeable and enthusiastic botanists

who are keen to share their knowledge and passion for plants. I enjoy recording locally, both on my own / with friends and with Liverpool Botanical Society and Lancashire Botany Group, and also on visits to Scotland in Easter Ross (v.c.106). I am keen to share my knowledge and discuss identifications, sedges and anything with blue flowers are passions of mine. I have been a member of council since 2011 so my term on council finishes this year.

Turning to field meetings, I thank Jonathan for his work in organising field meetings for England, including those planned for this year and thank all those who have offered meetings for 2020. Due to the current Covid-19 situation, my first task was to ask those hosting meetings in the first part of the season to cancel them, not the ideal start to a new role! I hope those organisers and others will be willing to host a meeting in 2021.



Tussilago farfara (Colt's-foot).
(Mary Dean)

At time of writing (early May), all field meetings until the end of June have been cancelled and this is extended to the end of July for all meetings with a residential or indoor element. For all of us who are looking to get out in the field and join fellow botanists in enjoying plants, it is obviously disappointing to cancel meetings, however we all need to follow government advice and [advice from the BSBI](#). Please be aware that government advice can change and

that the BSBI site is regularly updated to reflect the latest position.

Hopefully we will be able to hold some meetings later in the year and I look forward to meeting more fellow botanists in the future.

BSBI Activities 2020 at home

BSBI has a [range of activities](#) you can do at home under lockdown. You have probably already seen that BSBI is running a [Garden Wildflower Hunt](#) which you might want to join or recommend to family and friends. Anyone can take part and the website links to resources to help with plant identification.

The Committee for England 2019 – 2021

The following members were either nominated by Council in 2019 November or subsequently co-opted to the Committee. There were not enough members present at the 2020 Annual Meeting to formally elect any members. The posts of Secretary and Newsletter Editor are currently vacant.

Jonathan Shanklin (Chair, Hon. Field Meetings Secretary and VCR for Cambridgeshire jdsh@bas.ac.uk)

Mary Dean (Council, England Field Meetings Secretary deanm@edgehill.ac.uk)

Ian Denholm (Trustee, Editor-in-Chief *British & Irish Botany*, VCR for Hertfordshire)

Anne Haden (Council, VCR for Jersey)

Martin Godfrey (Council)

Chris Metherell (VCR for North Northumberland)

David Morris (VCR for Oxfordshire)

Jo Parmenter (Secretary R&R)

Fred Rumsey (Natural History Museum)

In this, the first England Newsletter, the formal Constitution for the Committee is given at the end. If revised, details will be given in future Newsletters, otherwise it can be found on the BSBI Governance page. The Constitution does not specify what the Committee should do, however the first Annual Meeting decided that it should produce a Newsletter and should not normally get involved with local planning matters.



Ian Denholm with *Gymnadenia densiflora* (Marsh Fragrant-orchid) at Chippenham Fen NNR

Other things that the Committee might do include:

- Organising recorders' meetings and workshops
- Providing a "get together" for county recorders – hopefully there will be a big event in 2021 organised by R&R and T&E for all recorders.
- Liaising with other organisations – government agencies and NGOs - at a local level
- Working with T&E on educational initiatives
- Giving a regional view to BSBI Council
- Clarifying recording matters
- Supporting national projects
- Organising England projects
- Submitting news and regional roundups for BSBI News, normally through the England Officer

- Noting issues to take to other Committees, Council or Board

Topics that the newsletter will aim to include are:

- Reports from the England Annual Meeting
- Reports from other England meetings
- Annual reports from England vice-county recorders
- Any items of general vice-county news
- Reports of any new vice-county records of native species, or re-finds of native or alien species thought long extinct – with illustrations. New **country** records of aliens or other county records of aliens showing a significant change in range.
- Hints, tips and keys

It will not duplicate material that should appear in BSBI News or the BSBI Yearbook. It is aimed at all BSBI members.

If you would like to get involved with the committee do get in touch with the chair, who currently acts as Secretary and Editor as well. The Committee has to hold at least two meetings a year, but only one will be in person, usually on the day of the Annual Meeting. The coronavirus lockdown has demonstrated that Zoom works well, so we will use this for the other meetings.

Annual Report for 2019 from the Chair of the Committee for England

The BSBI Council agreed that there was a need for a Committee for England (CfE) at its Council meeting at the end of November 2019 and asked me to become its first Chair. With only a month to report on this report can be fairly brief! I have drawn up a draft Constitution, together

with a draft “prospectus” that describes some of the things the CfE might undertake, written a note for BSBI News and brought together an initial committee. Of necessity, I have also acted as Secretary and England Field Meetings Secretary (FMS). Mary Dean has agreed to become England FMS from 2020. Together with Pete Stroh I am organising a Regional Recorders Workshop, which will take place in Northamptonshire in March. Progress towards this England Annual Meeting has been rather more rapid than I anticipated so apologies for its rather improvised nature, which is entirely down to me.

Jonathan Shanklin



Botanists above Malham Tarn at the 2019 ASM (David Morris)

Annual Report for 2019 from the England Officer: Pete Stroh

Main tasks 2019

I've listed below the main tasks undertaken during 2019 in my roles as England Officer and Scientific Officer, as the two roles, and therefore tasks, often overlap. The majority

of my 'England Officer' time was spent liaising on a regular basis with VCRs, concerning all manner of topics, although the Atlas featured quite heavily as you might expect. I organised three 'official' meetings, and attended many 'informal' meetings with VCRs and Local Groups. The year was dominated by the writing, editing and publication of *Grasslands plants of the British and Irish lowlands*, and the Atlas.



Pete Stroh in the field

England Officer (mainly)

- Multiple visits to VCRs and their respective counties, including visiting new VCRs
- Validation workshops
- Atlas caption workshops
- Various notes and articles for BSBI News (Jan, April, September)

- Talks for Leicester Lit & Phil Soc, Northants Nats, Edinburgh BSBI Conference, Wales BSBI AGM
- Collating Panel of VCRs for the BSBI Yearbook
- Finnis Scott Foundation – organisation of funding for Atlas surveys in Scotland, and writing of final report for the project
- Publication of *British Wildlife* England Report (with Simon Leach)
- Attending conifer workshop in Norfolk
- Providing advice for local sites to Northants Wildlife Trust reserve management team

Scientific Officer (mainly)

- Guidance for VCRs concerning Atlas and validation and iRecord
- Horizon scanning for the next Non-native invasive species; Wallingford (CEH)
- Species Status Assessment Group (SSAG - Red List) and Aquatic Plants Technical Advisory Group
- *Grassland plants of the British and Irish lowlands* – writing, editing & publication
- Production of final Atlas list ready for caption editing and validation
- Atlas captions (DDb); Atlas captions (editors); Atlas captions (guidance)
- Validation of rare/scarce/threatened records within the DDb for GB/Ireland



Pulsatilla vulgaris
(Pasqueflower) on the Devil's Ditch. (Jon Shanklin)

- Collation of Charophyte records for England, working with Nick Stewart
- Testing of phenological survey methodology for possible future project
- Project lead with Kew (Juan Viruel & Mike Fay) concerning threatened species, fragmentation and genetics
- *Spiranthes spiralis* (Autumn Lady's-tresses), *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid) long-term monitoring projects
- *Carex ericetorum* (Rare Spring-sedge) survey/Weeting Heath, leading to drafting of manuscript with Kevin Walker for submission to BIB
- *Jacobaea paludosa* (Fen Ragwort) fieldwork/write up for Nature in Cambridgeshire (2020) article
- *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *galeobdolon* (Yellow Archangel) – update of population distribution and size, with Paul Kirby & Bill Meek
- Published papers: *Anacamptis morio* at Upwood Meadows (BIB); *Astragalus glycyphyllos* (Wild Liquorice) (Nature in Cambridgeshire); Temporal changes in distributions and the species atlas (BIB; Oli Pescott, CEH, lead author)



Spiranthes spiralis
at Knocking Hoe, Bedfordshire

Annual Report for 2019 from the Hon. Field Meetings Secretary

Hitherto the BSBI Hon. Field Meetings Secretary (HFMS) has been charged with co-ordinating the field meetings for England, but this will become the task of the England FMS from 2020. As HFMS I had arranged eight field meetings for England in 2019, together with the Annual Summer Meeting (ASM), which was held at Malham Tarn. Reports of seven of these meetings appeared in the 2020 Yearbook, and the ASM report was in the January BSBI News. For 2020 I have arranged for ten field meetings in England and a Regional Recorders Workshop. The 2021 ASM will be in Guernsey.



Some of the participants at the 2019 Cotoneaster meeting at Cherry Hinton.

Jonathan Shanklin (HFMS)

England Annual Meeting 2020

The first England Annual Meeting was held at the Natural History Museum, London on February 1, by the kind invitation of Sandy Knapp and Fred Rumsey. Following the first Committee for England meeting, a short England AGM took place in the morning. The Chair, Jonathan Shanklin, apologised for the short notice of the meeting. Whilst the date had been on the BSBI meetings page since mid

December, many members only noted it when they received the Yearbook at the end of January. Reports from the England Officer, Hon Field Meetings Secretary and Chair were tabled (See above). The Committee was confirmed (Jonathan Shanklin as Chair, Mary Dean as England Field Meetings Secretary), although could not be elected as the meeting was not quorate. The position of Secretary was vacant. The minutes are on the BSBI Governance web page. The small number of members present allowed for an informal atmosphere and made flexible timing possible throughout the meeting.

During the lunch break there was a short tour of the NHM Garden. This included discussion of how to distinguish *Ulex europaeus* (Gorse) and *U. gallii* (Western Gorse), and the difference between *Erigeron canadensis* (Canadian Fleabane) and *E. sumatrensis* (Guernsey Fleabane), which was present in the Garden. A few casual records were taken, and carvings of spiders and other fauna on the walls of the Museum admired. The DDb previously had only 8 records since 2010 for the Garden. There was also the opportunity to look at display material from the Wildflower Society (WFS), including leaflets about #herbologyhunt.

After lunch Fred Rumsey gave a talk on “360 years of County Floras from Ray to Leslie”. He began with the first and the most recent Floras of Cambridgeshire (with a striking likeness in appearance between Ray and Alan Leslie). He traced the evolution of County Floras from the first one by Ray, showing how they had grown with time, and also that similar formats were used for lengthy periods of time, with large volumes favoured today. He noted some that got the thumbs down, often because they didn’t go into the local detail that the authors clearly knew. He concluded with what he considered the summit work – that of Arthur Chater. The talk was received enthusiastically.



After the talk those present had a discussion session on three topics: What do you want from the Committee for England? Environmental challenges for the BSBI and BSBI field projects for the 2020s. A draft list of things the Committee might do was discussed, with producing a newsletter suggested as the top priority. It was agreed that consideration of planning concerns should not normally be undertaken by the Committee. BSBI would continue to supply evidence, but campaigning should be left to others. In general, advocates of a policy try to narrow down choices, whereas BSBI could present a range of choices and leave value judgements to others. BSBI did need to raise its profile to make sure that our evidence is considered. Other suggestions were to encourage participation in the BSBI by undergraduates, PhD students and young consultants. Research by PhD students could perhaps be carried out in collaboration with the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

(CEH). We could encourage participation in field meetings by children –either by holding “virtual meetings” where children could remain at their home location, or by having properly accredited leaders at some meetings. It might however be better to collaborate with the WFS, who have more experience with events for children. Insurance might also be an issue for the BSBI, so the chair would check with the Head of Operations. We should collaborate in projects with other like-minded organisations such as Plantlife, the Woodland Trust and the WFS. Phenology would provide a good link to the WFS and Woodland Trust and to citizen science projects. BSBI already collaborates with Natural England on Red Lists etc, but we could engage more, perhaps on gaining access to SSSI. We could hold meetings that don’t involve recording and use common or folk names for plants to encourage beginners. The Research and Records Committee (R&R) should look at mechanisms for recording null records, in particular for rare plants previously known from a location. [This was put to R&R and Tom Humphrey replied that: Null records are supported in the DDb using an assigned status of “looked for and not found”. To be of any use, absence records must clearly indicate what site was checked and how, and possibly also details of when the taxon was last known to be present. They require a detailed comment and use of a well-defined and appropriately precise grid-reference. Absence is rarely recorded, there are only 4743 entries in the DDb.]

Potential future field projects suggested by Council were a repeat of the 2004 local change monitoring and monitoring of internationally and nationally important plant species. NPMS has long-term funding and support from JNCC and needs to be plugged. At an England level suggested projects were identification of best county sites and targeted habitat/species surveys. The Chair illustrated aspects of

these projects showing why they might be important and invited discussion. Formal adoption of any projects would have to wait until after the BSBI resilience review and definition by the BSBI science team. In the meantime we could start recording which plants were in flower when putting records into MapMate. We could also start more detailed recording of sites – evidence from Cambridgeshire suggested that whilst many SSSI were well covered at tetrad level there were significant gaps at monad level. Recording by compartment would be optimal, and time consuming, but could lead to production of site Floras. Which habitats and species were important would vary between counties – some counties had no saltmarshes, others had no mountains. Repeat monitoring of aquatic sites (for example ditches that are managed on a rotational basis) could reveal valuable information about population dynamics. Sandy Knapp made the point that monitoring widespread species was important, because this is where speciation occurs.



Hyacinthoides non-scripta
(Bluebell) is an internationally important plant

After a tea break Fred Rumsey produced some herbarium material and notes to alert us to species that we should be looking for. First was *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* (Pedunculate Club-rush), which had been the subject of a paper in [British & Irish Botany](#) (Vol 1, No 2). This appeared

to be the main inland plant unless appropriate saline habitat was present for *B. maritimus* (Sea Club-rush). A species that we might have was *Stellaria ruderalis*, a plant somewhat intermediate between *S. media* (Chickweed) and *S. neglecta* (Greater Chickweed), which was spreading in ruderal habitats in Europe. *Myosotis stricta* (Upright Forget-me-not) had been described in BSBI News (2019 April) and was another plant which we should look for carefully, noting the uncinate (hooked) hairs on the stem. Finally, *Lamium galeobdolon* subsp. *galeobdolon* (Yellow Archangel) was largely localised to one area of Lincolnshire but might be present elsewhere. It has smaller, rounder leaves, a fewer flowered inflorescence and hairs mostly on the angles of the stems.

By the close most participants had departed to catch their trains, but Fred and Jonathan visited the Hoop & Toy for a pint of cider.

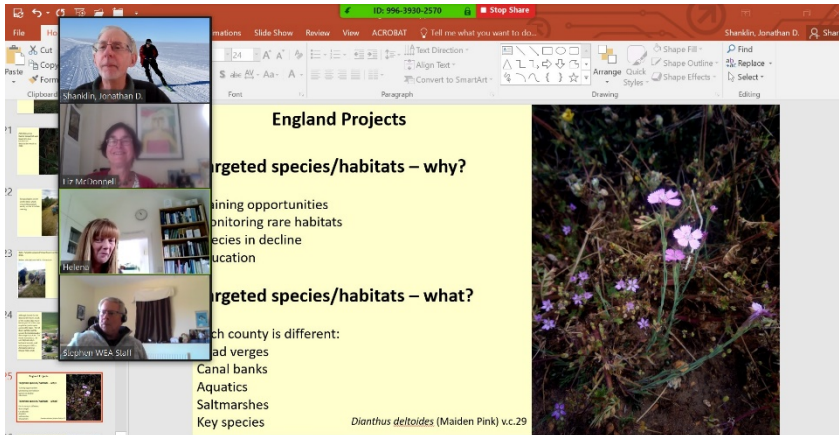
Regional Recorders' Zoom Meetings

Adapted by Chris Metherell from notes compiled by Jonathan Shanklin

Due to the coronavirus lockdown a local workshop that was intended to be held in late March for broadly eastern region vice-county recorders had to be postponed until September. To allow the recorders to catch up, Jonathan Shanklin arranged four virtual meetings by Zoom, which took place between April 9 and April 16 when a good cross-section of VCRs joined in and which lasted for between 2 and 3 hours each. We hope that a residential meeting will be organised in 2021, open to all members involved in recording.

The discussions were guided in general by matters discussed at the England Annual Meeting or which had been raised by recorders prior to the Zoom meetings.

These notes are an amalgam of all the meetings and have been re-organised into subjects rather than appearing in the order in which they were originally discussed. We covered a lot of ground and we feel that it is important that English members should know the spread of views. We hope that members will express their own views to VCRs, Country Officers and indeed this Newsletter.



The organiser's laptop view of a meeting

An England Newsletter

The Committee for England (CfE) had been tasked with producing a newsletter, though as no editor had come forward, the Chair had taken on the role pro tem. The idea of an England newsletter was welcomed, perhaps one or two a year if an editor volunteered, with some material selected from existing county newsletters so that they are made available to a wider audience, but no duplication with BSBI News. It needs to have an outreach element, so that it isn't just targeted at experienced botanists and VCRs

Recording Matters

There was a discussion about how it was often interesting to see how plant distributions changed between counties or

across local areas. Mostly this was due to differing geology and habitats, though occasionally it was due to local recording preferences. Sometimes this is just because one person in an area is familiar with similar species and can discriminate between them. One example is the pair *Stellaria media* (Common Chickweed) and *Stellaria pallida* (Lesser Chickweed), which are distinctively different once you know them, but can confuse you by growing together (see article by Richard Carter on page 72). Once this knowledge is passed on, records become much more frequent. Another example is *Lemna gibba* (Fat Duckweed), which more often than not is not fat and resembles *Lemna minor* (Common Duckweed) until you look at the central cells. It may well be more prevalent than shown on the BSBI hectad maps. This is clearly an area which the Newsletter could deal with.

We discussed BSBI insurance. It was clear that the position is unclear to many recorders and members, particularly where local groups are concerned. To some extent the problem was dealt with in the [May issue of BSBI e-News](#). The key message is that given the variation of local groups, please contact Jane Houldsworth at jane.houldsworth@bsbi.org to discuss your local circumstances to determine whether your group is covered by BSBI insurance. Please don't assume it is without checking first!

Planning permission issues

Although the CfE was not keen on becoming involved with planning issues unless they were of England wide concern, individual county recorders often comment on local issues. Council approved a draft conservation policy last November which should deal with these issues. It should be available shortly.

For example, when mineral extraction is finished at a site, Natural England should be advising Councils to ensure that the site is properly restored. This might be an avenue for local recorders or members to provide further input to make sure that nature is allowed to regenerate rather than going for instant results.



Left: *Allium triquetrum* (Three-cornered Garlic). Right: *A. paradoxum* (Few-flowered Garlic) with *Aegopodium podagraria* (Ground-elder). These invasive species are sometimes mistakenly planted in the wild.

Range expansion, invasives and novel species

It was suggested that we should be looking out for potential new invaders – perhaps each county could have a top two that seem to be spreading into the wider countryside. London has an Invasive Species Initiative, which is looking at local problem species. CEH have been doing horizon scanning for potential future invasive species. Perhaps something for CfE to encourage.

Suggestions were:

- Recording where wild flower mixes had been planted - by local authorities or farmers;
- Discussing with local councillors planting and mowing schemes;
- Discovering and monitoring soil brought in from out of area as these often produce novel species;

Numerous examples were mentioned from specific areas:

- Some uphill slip roads near where they join the A19 had interesting mini salt marsh communities, particular where parked-up road maintenance vehicles had churned up the ground.
- Similar communities (including eg *Triglochin maritima* (Sea Arrowgrass)) being found in the upland sections of some roads, perhaps because they were getting salted more frequently. Sometimes coastal species come in on imported marine sands and gravels, for example *Erodium maritimum* (Sea Stork's-bill) had been found inland in Hampshire.
- *Polygonum boreale* (Northern Knotgrass) had recently been found in Taunton, hundreds of miles from its nearest known site, whilst *Myosurus minimus* (Mousetail) had been found in northern Scotland for the first time.
- *Trifolium subterraneum* (Subterranean Clover) had been found around a street tree in Bath;
- *Alchemilla alpina* (Alpine Lady's-mantle) near a church in Crockham Hill, some way from any likely garden origin.



Trifolium striatum (Knotted Clover) at a Cambridge site “made good” with Breckland sand. (Jonathan Shanklin)

Tree planting

We noted that Kevin Walker had provided input to the Natural Capital Committee which had advised government on tree planting. However planting trees in wet corners or steep banks, which are often the most diverse remaining habitats on farms is still often advised. Some parts of the Forestry Commission are still wedded to planting conifers, and they are considering introducing Eucalyptus into the mix. Members should be on the lookout for these

Environment Bill

The National Trust had taken a lead in input to the new Environment Bill. We felt that it would be helpful for BSBI to voice an opinion, though it is important to have a coordinated approach with other organisations so that conflicted views don't come forward. Our view was that in

general we need enhanced schemes for both farmers and SSSI sites, ideally with the farm schemes led by local farmers' groups.



Many SSSI sites would benefit from managed grazing. The Roman Road in Cambridgeshire has to be “grazed” by volunteers.

Nature Reserves

We were concerned that some managers of nature reserves are keen on re-introducing “lost” species and sometimes do this without consultation with the local VCR or without documenting what they have done. However best practice on re-introduction or boosting populations was sometimes followed, with consultation both with Natural England and the VCR and guidance will be available in the Conservation Policy referred to above.

Some managers of conservation sites may not know what their important plants and habitats are, nor which are “good”

plants and which are “bad” plants. Although in some areas volunteers do monitor these sites we need to do more. Some managers of LNRs have a policy that all biodiversity is welcome, so have no qualms over introductions. It is important that we communicate the results of our own surveys to managers of sites setting up a two-way street.

Dot occupancy

Many members use BSBI maps! However dot occupancy does not always (perhaps never) represent actual abundance of a species. We discussed whether with key species (eg RPR species) it would be worth recording either actual numbers, or DAFOR abundance. Some native species that are in decline won't show up in mapping because they are still present, though in much reduced numbers. These might show up through NPMS monitoring or through the CEH [countryside survey](#). Such species might be a good focus for targeted surveys. We know that it is a difficult problem to devise suitable methodology. Perhaps the CfE could try?

BSBI post Atlas 2020 projects

Council approved several potential post Atlas 2020 projects last November, for all BSBI members at local country level. We await the Trustees views. Potential country projects included “Best” county sites and targeted species or habitat monitoring.

Details of BSBI wide projects would apparently have to wait until after completion of Atlas 2020 work. In addition to the continuing National Plant Monitoring Scheme these could include a re-run of the Local Change monitoring, possibly in 2024.

In the absence, at present, of a lead from the centre some

VCRs are already setting up their own schemes and accordingly we discussed several possibilities.

England Projects - Sites

There was a long discussion about “best” county sites, their selection and possible monitoring and very many useful views were expressed. In view of the interest the CfE will draft some guidance for those who may wish to become involved as soon as lockdown lifts.

England Projects - Targeted species and habitats

Mark Spencer gave an example a couple of species that could be particularly targeted for follow up: Whilst with the Natural History Museum he had been looking at *Thymus* specimens of the three native species from across the UK. One historical specimen, from the Gog Magog Hills near Cambridge, stood out as being different. It might just be a very hairy form of *Thymus drucei* (Wild Thyme), but it might be a new species. By coincidence, Jonathan Shanklin had arranged to visit the site, which is now a golf course, but this has been put on hold by the coronavirus.



Thymus herbarium specimen from the Gog Magog Hills, collected in 1895 by A Hosking. © The Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Many other examples were suggested and it is clear that this would be a very popular project area. Indeed many

have already started! Once again, the CfE will look at the possibilities for England, perhaps through an extension of the Threatened Plant Project of some 12 years ago or based around RPR species. Habitats might for example include wetlands and rivers, dunes, roadsides or woodlands (and indeed others).



Glabrous variant of *Ranunculus repens* (Creeping Buttercup). (Mark Spencer). A plant to search for along semi-brackish to tidal rivers.

iRecord and other recording systems

There was much discussion about recording systems, much of it only relevant to VCRs. However members may be interested to know that Pete Stroh exclusively uses iRecord for record entry. It allows for real-time feedback. Several VCRs act as verifiers although the feedback that they give is not always welcomed by the recipient! Presumably not BSBI members! There were often problems with grid references and site names. There was a general view that

records would not be accepted if entered under a pseudonym. Geoffrey Hall (v.c.55) will discuss issues with R&R and Pete Stroh will take relevant matters up with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology who run the system. Some VCRs use their own systems, Dorset uses [Living Record](#) which seems to work much more smoothly. It also allows recording to site polygons.

It is useful for everyone to know that priority is being given to add Stage 4 names to the DDb, which will facilitate data entry and link with the map pages.

We discussed various enhancements to our recording capability. There is a perception that dedicated GPS units may have better precision than smart phone apps, although that may not be the case. Some VCRs use [Cucaera](#) or other on-line mapping software for generating good 8-figure grid-references. Smartphone cameras (or eg Olympus Tough TG-6 cameras) are a good way to provide additional documentation (eg panoramic views of location, plant close-ups etc).

New Handbooks and other publications

We came up with a wish-list:

- *Amaranthaceae* (Goosefoots, Oraches etc), however Mark Spencer noted that work is taking place internationally to revise some species, so it may be worth holding fire.
- *Atriplex* as it is thought there are quite a lot of erroneous records.
- A reprint of the *Sorbus* Handbook would be appreciated.

- Recorders were looking forward to the arrival of the *Alchemilla* Handbook.
- *Ranunculus* (Buttercups), particularly the Water-crowfoots.
- A Handbook on *Epilobium* (Willowherbs), including hybrids.
- Rushes (*Juncus* and *Luzula*)
- Ragworts (*Senecio* and *Jacobaea*).

Members may have their own views and should feel free to pass them to the CfE or directly to Publications Committee.



Jacobaea paludosa (Fen Ragwort), Kingfishers Bridge, v.c.29. (Jonathan Shanklin)

We also felt that videos were an excellent medium where some groups were concerned. The Wildflowers of Britain and Ireland Facebook group had come across problems with identifying *Symphytum* (Comfrey) species and that might be worth a video or on-line media product. *Erigeron* species *E. canadensis* (Canadian Fleabane), *E. sumatrensis* (Guernsey Fleabane) and *E. floribunda* (Bilbao's Fleabane) could also be good taxa to cover as "jizz"

could be shown as well as focussing in on the details. Tim Rich has produced quite a lot of videos and these can be

accessed via the BSBI [videos page](#).

It would be good to expand the [Plant Crib](#) and we could have “virtual” Handbooks on the web page, particularly for new Stage 4 taxa like the *Polygonum aviculare* (Knotgrass) aggregate.

Site designation

Many members will not even know of the existence of Local Wildlife Sites (other local names may be used) and they are poorly publicised. These are designated locally and have minimal protection and oversight. We discussed methods of designating these. Although there was updated guidance provided by [DEFRA in 2006](#) and using this was becoming more common practice, consistency still varies widely across the country. In most areas the lead is taken by the local Wildlife Trust. We discussed various local experiences. This is clearly an England-specific problem where CfE might take a lead.

Site names

Surprisingly many reported that site naming can be complex and time-consuming. An illustration is Newmarket Heath, which includes the geographical feature, the SSSI (which crosses vice-county boundaries) and a Local (County) Wildlife Site (LWS) (which stops at the administrative county boundary). We found that different recorders use different systems and practices. Co-ordination may well be useful. It would be good to have a national system that could garner together all the boundary information about sites from NNR, SSSI, LWS, LNR, PRVs and footpaths, canals etc, however landowners may not wish it to be public knowledge that they have an LWS. The designated sites also need to be on a national system, as on occasion the present landowner may not know that they have a designated site if it is below SSSI level. We felt that this is something BSBI could push for.

Ddb input

Although this might appear to be a purely VCR issue, however of course it is volunteer members who submit many records who are also a very important part of the equation. Virtually everyone was in agreement that as far as possible records should come to the VCR first, though there was an understanding that this could be difficult with large datasets. We discussed status and agreed that it is a vital part of any record where status (eg planted) is not clear. There is an interesting article in *British & Irish Botany* on [Recording plant status and regeneration during single visits](#).



An urban “meadow” of exotic species on Parker’s Piece, Cambridge
(Jonathan Shanklin)

A further consideration was how Ddb records were to be made available to a wider audience. Council concluded last year that all BSBI members should have access to Ddb records. This has not yet been implemented pending the issue of fresh VCR guidelines, which should be out shortly.

We know that many members submit records via spreadsheets. Council have approved a plan to allow online data entry to the DDb but resources have become much more problematic due to the Covid19 outbreak and progress may have to wait. Accordingly, pending that development, we know that many would welcome advice on how to transfer them regularly and efficiently to the DDb.

Liaison with other organisations

Jane Houldsworth is already establishing stronger links with organisations like the National Trust and Natural England, so it is important for the CfE not to duplicate this or to give differing messages. An issue which will be close to all members' hearts is the Government proposals to criminalise trespass in England. Ideally we want right of access instead. It is often very difficult to find or contact landowners and we need to represent this to Government. SSSI ownership is often difficult to discover and even Natural England has problems. The meetings highlighted problems in specific areas, however CfE would like to know from members in England of problems they have encountered.

Conclusions

Several common themes seemed to emerge which will be of considerable interest to members and volunteers. There was a general consensus that site monitoring was essential, but the exact way that this could be done would vary between counties. There seemed less enthusiasm for selecting “best” county sites, but these might in any case feature in County Floras or Rare Plant Registers.

Targeted surveys on selected species were also popular – this could be a repeat visit (or visits) to some of the TPP species and sites or it could be to follow key species at either county or country level. The new lists of Nationally

Scarce and Nationally Rare species, together with any that had shown unexpected declines at England level could be targeted. There was also a view that we should be keeping an eye on invasive species.



Trifolium fragiferum, Stanley, Falkland Islands, in 2010. The field guide to the plants of the islands (Kew, 2019) comments that it has not been seen there since 1938. The leaf venation is distinctly different to that of *T. repens* (Creeping Clover) and this helps with vegetative identification.

Another consensus is that in so far as is practicable all records should come to the VCR first before going to the DDb. There will be many ways that this could be implemented, ranging from simply holding records in a quarantine area (as is done for iRecord records), to generating emails with MapMate (or other format) import files on a monthly basis. There was also agreement that MapMate is becoming problematic for many VCRs and that an alternative is needed. Living Record had advantages in

that it involved the VCR and LRC, which iRecord did not do by default.

Some of these issues will be taken to the Standing Committees and Trustees for action and some will be dealt with by the CfE. Hopefully, the next issue of the newsletter will include a report on what progress has been made.

Vice-county reports for 2019

v.c.1a, West Cornwall, Colin French

There are now 2,259,536 flowering plant and fern records for Cornwall. An increase of 64k (18,133 for v.c.1 and 31,679 for v.c.2). The difference making up the 64k are records added to the database for previous years. 35 new taxa added to the Cornish List. Finally, I was not able to do much recording myself during 2019 and instead spent the whole year, 7 days a week, apart from holidays, writing the new Flora of Cornwall. This should be published in the summer of 2020.

v.c.1b, Isles of Scilly, Rosemary Parslow

With the new Flora having been published there has been something of a lull in recording. Mistakenly some people seemed to think there was no need to carry on sending in records so I have been encouraging them to continue submitting records. Unfortunately, I have not made as many visits to Scilly as I would like. Up until recently I have relied on getting paid work on the islands to supplement my recording trips there. But organisations such as NE having less involvement with Scilly those opportunities have almost dried up. Fortunately, a good friend Liz Askins who lives on Scilly has joined BSBI and has been taking an increasing part in recording so we now have someone on the Isles for

the first time. During my visits I have been trying to fill in gaps in recording as well as checking on some of the particularly vulnerable plants such as coastal species. The increased storminess and sea level rise are clearly having an impact. Additionally, the earlier and earlier appearance of *Ophioglossum lusitanicum* (Least Adder's-tongue) is striking – could this indicate a response to global warming? With an archipelago of very small, low-lying islands perhaps such changes may be more obvious?



Basal rosette of *Laphangium luteoalbum*. It is abundant at the edge of a block paving yard of a local store around the corner from where Jonathan Shanklin lives in Cambridge.

v.c.2, East Cornwall, Ian Bernallick

A busy year with 17 Botanical Cornwall Group field meetings organised all over Cornwall, early season meetings targeting old *Stellaria pallida* (Lesser Chickweed) sites (refound in almost all old sites). As part of the ongoing recording of every monad in Cornwall for the New Flora (covering 2000-2020) several square-bashers finally visited



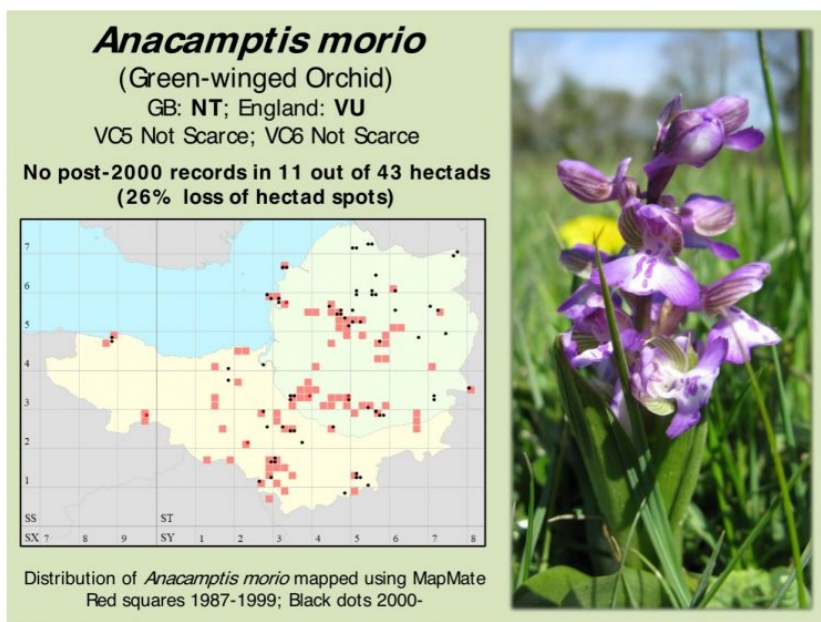
the last of ALL the monads in Cornwall: there are 3963 monads (whole or parts of monads). In 2019 we got another 235 monads over 199 spp. recorded since 1999 (2697 in total are now over 199). No significant discoveries but many new or updated records have been made. *Laphangium luteoalbum* (Jersey Cudweed) continues to spread (now in 21 monads since first seen in 2014) and *Epilobium pedunculare* (Rockery Willowherb) (now

in 30 monads after 1999) appears to be replacing *E. brunnescens* (New Zealand Willowherb) in gravel tracks in plantations. One of the highlights was the discovery by David Pearman of copies of the 620 exquisite watercolours painted by Emily Stackhouse, of Trehane, nr Truro, from the period 1832 to 1858. These range from the earliest record of *Allium ampeloprasum* var. *babingtonii* (Babington's Leek) to rare cornfield aliens, including several first county records.

v.c.3, South Devon, Roger Smith

Notable native plants in VC3 include a large population of *Carex montana* (Soft-leaved Sedge) in a new site on Dartmoor found by Andy Byfield, *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (Four-leaved Allseed) at Plymouth found by Tim Purches, *Verbascum lychnitis* (White Mullein) at Killerton found by Bob Hodgson and *Centaurium x ubsdellii* found during the DAB field meeting to Dawlish Warren. Twelve new aliens

including *Brachypodium phoenicuroides* at Exmouth (see BSBI News) were also recorded.



©Helena Crouch

v.c.5, South Somerset, Stephen Parker & Simon Leach
Another year concentrating mainly on improving coverage for Atlas 2020, we submitted more than 26,000 records to the BSBI database. We targeted under-recorded parts of the county, as well as key under-recorded habitats and species, such as unimproved neutral grassland and the undoubtedly declining *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid). In contrast, *Lathraea squamaria* (Toothwort) is doing well, with targeted searches in 2019 re-finding many populations not recorded since 2000. Much recording has been undertaken by members of Somerset Rare Plants Group (SRPG), and we greatly appreciate their continuing endeavours to understand and document our flora. Both SRPG and the Somerset Botany Group are successfully

attracting new members, including many botanically less-experienced people keen to develop their field skills. Local groups are flourishing and contribute massively to the overall recording effort. New VC records in 2019 included *Crepis biennis* (Rough Hawk's-beard), *Carex x boeninghausiana* (*C. paniculata* x *remota*), *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *pulchella* (an Early Marsh-orchid) and *Trifolium tomentosum* (Woolly Clover). We supported Plantlife's 'Colour in the Margins' project, aimed at conserving rare arable plants. A small team of volunteers continued to work on the county's herbarium in Taunton, supported by the South West Heritage Trust. Much good work has been done recently on critical taxa. With help from John Richards, we continued to add to our tally of dandelions (*Taraxacum* spp), which now stands at 140 species, including several species new to science. One of these, *T. amicorum*, translates as 'the Dandelion of Friends', commemorating both the BSBI's *Taraxacum* workshop here in 2016 – based at the Meeting House of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in Taunton – and (quoting John Richards) "the friendly circle of botanists [in the SRPG] who were inspired ... to tackle the *Taraxacum* flora of their area".

v.c.6, North Somerset, Helena Crouch

In 2019, over 66,000 records were made in v.c.6, input to MapMate and sent to the BSBI: I inputted nearly 48,000 of those. Maps of species density per monad and tetrad were updated regularly on the SRPG website to focus our coverage of recording for Atlas 2020. All 2019 records have been input; validation is ongoing. A number of active groups, as well as many dedicated individuals, contributed records: Somerset Rare Plants Group (SRPG), Somerset Botany Group (SBG), Cam Valley Wildlife Group (CVWG), Bath Natural History Society (BNHS) and Bristol Naturalists' Society (BNS). Thousands of records were made on field

meetings: SRPG held 9 all-day field meetings in v.c.6; SBG met weekly from April to September, with 15 surveys in v.c.6; CVWG recorded every Wednesday evening for 23 weeks through the summer; BNS held 4 botanical field meetings in v.c.6; BNHS made botanical records on 5 field meetings in v.c.6; SRPG also held 3 indoor meetings early in 2019, and organised 2 well-attended field workshops, on sedges and aquatic plants. I gave talks on aspects of the Somerset flora to 5 local organisations, ran a Duckweed workshop at the Scottish Botanists' Conference and did a talk on the West Galway BSBI meeting at the AEM. Progress with the Rare Plant Register was slow in 2019. The RPR list is kept updated on the SRPG website, with over 200 species accounts written so far.



Senecio inaequidens, Cambridgeshire (Jonathan Shanklin)

v.c.9, Dorset, Robin Walls

Extracts from the Dorset Flora Group AGM last November are: Notable new records: *Senecio inaequidens* (Narrow-leaved Ragwort), *Galium parisiense* (Wall Bedstraw),

Cuscuta campestris (Yellow Dodder), *Lotus angustissimus* (Slender Bird's-foot Trefoil), *Ludwigia palustris* (Hampshire-purslane) and *Cotula coronopifolia* (Buttonweed). Numbers of records in the BSBI database are 275 126 post-2000 records (excluding duplicates). More recently, the Living Record total is 199,532 (at 27th Nov 2019) from the following sources: Dorset Flora Group 101437, National Trust Purbeck 34288, DERC 34255, Living Record Team 10363, BU Students 4410, other groups 14779.

v.c.10, Wight, Colin Pope

2019 has been a busy year filling recording gaps. All records for 2019 have been digitised and validated. Botany Group field meetings have been well attended (averaging 20 individuals per meeting) as has the annual indoor meeting (35 individuals). We hosted a weekend field meeting of the British Pteridological Society in May which was well received. It has been particularly heartening to be able to re-record two native species for which there were no v.c.10 post 2000 records: *Juncus squarrosus* (Heath Rush) and *Hieracium calcaricola* (Toothed Hawkweed) and to re-find rare Island natives at sites where they have not been seen since 2000: *Dryopteris carthusiana* (Narrow Buckler-Fern), *Fumaria densiflora* (Dense-flowered Fumitory), *Moenchia erecta* (Upright Chickweed), *Silene uniflora* (Sea Champion), *Centaurea cyanus* (Cornflower), *Torilis arvensis* (Spreading Hedge-parsley) and *Alopecurus aequalis* (Orange Foxtail).

v.c.11, South Hampshire, Martin Rand

I diverted quite a lot of recording effort to chasing up taxa with hectad records between 1970 and 1999 but nothing for the hectad since. This had a low yield and was rather dispiriting (habitat loss / degradation), but I felt it was necessary. All expected 2019 records were digitised by the end of the year. Location-related validation was completed, and validation of rarities / isolated records / oddities was

started. The Hampshire Notables list has been revised in the light of Atlas recording and other factors, and the latest version in an improved format is now available to download from the new [Hants Plants web site](#) currently under development.



Orange Foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis*, Hogmoor Inclosure, 18 May 2019 (Gareth Knass)

I ran a workshop on herbarium techniques and use of a herbarium jointly with the v.c.12 recorder at Hampshire County Museums Service; Atlas 2020 review sessions; a workshop on GPS and use of recording technology in the field; a 2-day sedge ID workshop; a 1-day grass ID workshop jointly with Andy Cross of BSBI / Hampshire Flora Group; and organised a visit to Portsmouth City Museum herbarium. I participated in various other group meetings,

encouraged people to join me for Atlas recording trips, and led a botanical walk for Wildlife Trust members. I gave talks at events organised by organisations like Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC), and wrote plant reports and articles on ID recording for the Hampshire Flora Group newsletter. I continue to be a member of the Wildlife Trust Conservation and Science Committee and HBIC Steering Group.

v.c.12, North Hampshire, Tony Mundell

In 2019 I was out with my helpers for typically three days each week between March and early November. Some attention was diverted to trying to re-find old records of particular species where there was no post-2000 record for the whole 10 km square. In all 78 previously recorded plants were re-found, 291 were not re-found, and a further 19 could not be checked because of access. The re-find rate of 26% was rather poor, but it was worth doing for those extra 78 records, each one the only recent record for the whole hectad. However, I did find it a rather depressing exercise, seeing how habitats I had known over 20 years ago had deteriorated. We also made the level of recording more uniform across all tetrads. Omitting part-tetrads on the county borders, by the end of 2019 all tetrads have over 200 taxa recorded from 2000 onwards. Also all tetrads wholly in VC12, except one, are now up to over 60% re-found or new from 2000 onwards. Eight tetrads now exceed 500 taxa found from 2000 onwards. At 10km scale, many hectads now exceed 1,000 taxa ever recorded. Our local Hampshire Flora Group is very active with many field meetings etc throughout the year. I led four of them in 2019. I also helped with 'square-bashing' for Atlas 2020 in Alderney. Validation of DDb records started cranking up towards the end of the year. The best finds in 2019 include a new colony of *Cephalanthera longifolia* (Narrow-leaved Helleborine) and some *Phelipanche purpurea* (Yarrow Broomrape).

v.cc.15, 16, Kent, Geoffrey Kitchener & Sue Buckingham

[Kent Botany 2019](#) gives a full report on Kent botanical developments for the year. Finds included: *Juncus ranarius* (Frog Rush), now restored to the Kent flora, discovered at Crossness (v.c.16); *Juncus x surrejanus*, unrecorded in v.c.15 for over 50 years, appearing plentiful and overlooked



Verbena incompta
(Danny Chesterman)

at Hothfield; *Myosotis suzae*, discovered at Stodmarsh NNR (v.c.15), the first Kent record; *Parapholis incurva* (Curved Hard-grass), re-found in its 1632 location at Margate (v.c.15); *Tragopogon porrifolius* subsp. *australis* (Salsify), now recorded in both vice counties, previously overlooked as a subspecies; *Verbena incompta* (Purpletop Vervain), an invasive plant in various parts of

the world related to *Verbena bonariensis* (Argentinian Vervain), found in v.c.15. We finished the year with over half a million records for 2010-19, of which some 81% were made by or reported to Kent Botanical Recording Group. The group programmed 15 field meetings during the season, focussing several on Low Weald areas which appeared under-recorded: these were rewarded by *Carex elongata* (Elongated Sedge), *Ranunculus arvensis* (Corn Buttercup), *Ranunculus tripartitus* (Three-lobed Crowfoot) and *Thelypteris palustris* (Marsh Fern). We held a winter meeting to practise using John Poland's Field Key to Winter

Twigs, a meeting with instruction on identification of willows and another concentrating on *Salicornia* (Glasswort) species. The latter was arranged at the request of the Wild Flower Society and attracted a large attendance. Records were added for some 270 previously unvisited monads so that monad coverage (in the sense of at least one visit) was substantially complete. Validation for Atlas 2020 was started. Drafting the rare plant register reached Part Q/R and all earlier parts were refreshed online. In April, yet more of Francis Rose's missing and unpublished Flora of Kent was discovered; the online transcript has been developed further. Also now online is Alex Lockton's Flora and Vegetation of Hothfield Heath, produced in 2019. David Johnson's Wild Orchids of Kent was published, in which the recording group's contribution of mapping data is fully acknowledged.

v.cc.18, 19, Essex, Kenneth J Adams

Our recording team added 33,000 new monad records during the year, bringing our total database records to 827,000. The monads for which more than 100 records have been added post 2000 are shown on the map in green. All post 2005 data has been entered on MapMate, but we have a backlog of 2000-2005 records still at the paper stage. As in previous years recording sessions open to all comers have been held on 3-days a week in different parts of the county throughout the season. Unfortunately our small team of fully competent elderly recorders has been decimated over the autumn/winter by cancer and bereavements etc. and checking will be slow this spring. County Recorder Ken Adams has given up running his up to 7 days of botanical I.D. courses a year for the FSC after 47 years, to concentrate on writing the 3rd Flora & Atlas of Essex plants. He will however continue to produce the 1,000 run Essex Botany twice a year with No: 10 published this January. An exhibit of historical accounts with monad

maps showing how 16 invasive species have spread out from our major towns and ports since the 1970s was exhibited at the Wat Tyler Centre, Pitsea in December and will be available at the BSBI Regional Recorders Workshop on March 28th.

v.c.20, Hertfordshire, Ian Denholm

Ian Denholm (ID) assisted by Alla Mashanova (AM) led six one-day field visits by the Herts Flora Group to update plant lists for under-recorded hectads and to check on the status



Orchis militaris in Hertfordshire
(Scott Chalmers)

of uncommon species. AM additionally collated plant records from field meetings of the British Natural History Society. ID participated in several botanical surveys of Local Wildlife Sites and SSSIs commissioned by the Herts Environmental Record Centre and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. All these events generated new plant records and included valuable training opportunities. Records continued to be digitised via

IRecord or Recorder 6 but by the end of 2019 there were still records of relevance to the new Atlas awaiting transfer to the DDb. ID led a national BSBI meeting to Rothamsted Research that was greatly over-subscribed and will be repeated. ID, AM and Trevor James contributed to the botanical component of a State of Nature report for Herts scheduled for launch in early 2020. Botanical highlights included reappearance of *Orchis militaris* (Military Orchid) where it was last seen in 2016, and discovery of a new site

for the locally rare *Viola canina* (Heath Dog-violet). ID (with Richard Bateman) revisited historical sites for rare orchids, failing to relocate *Epipactis leptochila* (Narrow-lipped Helleborine) and *Herminium monorchis* (Musk Orchid) for the county and noting an alarming decline in sites for *Epipactis phyllanthes* (Green-flowered Helleborine). More positively, *Epipactis palustris* (Marsh Helleborine) is still present in appreciable numbers at its only recent site in Herts.

v.c.21, Middlesex, Mark Spencer

2019 has largely consisted of preparing large datasets for submission to our LRC, Greenspace for Greater London and the BSBI DDb. These data have consisted of 'historic' records, most pre 1990 from various literature sources and the London Natural History Society's botany card index archive. A lot of these data require validation, doing this is going to take a very long time! The dataset compilation has (obviously) been for Atlas 2020 as well as the next flora of the London area which I will start writing in 2020. In my joint role as BSBI v.c.21 and LNHS vascular plant recorder I have undertaken various recording events across London and have supported a local community initiative to save an important urban grassland, Warren Farm, from being developed. Unfortunately, we have not had any 'exciting' botanical finds in the vice-county this year.

v.c.23, Oxfordshire, David Morris

The last season of Atlas 2020 very much dominated my mind and the activities of local botanists in Oxfordshire in 2019. Many of the nice finds were documented on [my blog](#) for instance, we had a few county resurrections such as *Potamogeton polygonifolius* (Bog Pondweed). However, my abiding memory of the 2019 will be completing the verification of the roughly 300,000 records made since 2000. Oxfordshire can be pleased with its Atlas 2020

dataset, especially considering the relatively small number of recorders and how late we started recording for Atlas. In spite of their exertions for Atlas, many local recorders enjoyed the recording and so we will be continuing in a similar vein into 2020 and beyond.

v.c.27, East Norfolk, Bob Ellis

Norfolk Flora Group held 29 field meetings and 3 workshops (Conifers, Brambles, Dryopteris) across the two vice-counties. 11 of the field meetings were held in v.c.27. 10,299 records were collected and entered into MapMate for v.c.27. This is fewer than the 18,737 in 2018 largely because of more precisely targeted recording as well as an even greater emphasis on v.c.28 with the Flora Group. Perhaps the most satisfying result of targeted recording was the refinding of *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* (Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage) in hectad TG23 in and around the Gunton Park Estate and perhaps the most surprising find was *Lycopodiella inundata* (Marsh Clubmoss) at Horsford Heath in TG11 where the last dated record was in 1888.



Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*)

Photo: Janet Higgins

Geranium columbinum (Long-stalked Crane's-bill) was found in two new localities within its East Norfolk heartland in TG03 and TG13 but it has yet to be refound in any of its south-east Norfolk localities in TM19, TM39 and TG30. *Lathyrus nissolia* (Grass Vetchling) was found in TM18 new to the hectad and was abundant on an airfield and *Medicago minima* (Bur

Medick) was new to TG10, though possibly just a casual. It was good to revisit *Crithmum maritimum* (Rock Samphire) at Scratby where it has been for 11 years now. Unusual finds during the year were *Calandrinia ciliata* (Red-maids) on imported soil at the edge of an old canal which is being restored, *Euphorbia prostrata* (Prostrate Sandmat) in pavement cracks in Norwich and perhaps unwelcome, *Ludwigia grandiflora* (Uruguayan Primrose-willow) in a pond near Paston.

v.c.29, Cambridgeshire, Jonathan Shanklin

Without doubt the highlight of the year for vc29 has been the publication of Alan Leslie's Flora of Cambridgeshire. Another major event was the retirement of Alan as VCR. All hectads and tetrads in the county achieved the desired target of at least 75% of species known from the squares being recorded post 1999 with at least 120 species recorded from each tetrad. The completion of coverage in vc29 by late summer allowed time for visits to improve coverage in the vc31 part of administrative Cambridgeshire. The county RPR and RPCC were updated, with several additional species being noted in significant decline in the county; a few species were deleted from the lists following re-finds. Thorough surveys were made of several sites – RSPB Fen Drayton, Kingfishers Bridge, the Furze Hills [with *Dianthus deltoides* (Maiden Pink) found in flower], Magdalene College and Robinson College. Recording for the Fenland Flora project wound down, but made many records in the north of the county. Several *Taraxacum* species were added to the county list following the BSBI *Taraxacum* workshop. There were several new alien species found, and *Campanula rapunculoides* (Rampion Bellflower) was found on a Cambridge common. Two BSBI meetings visited the county and there were eight Cambridgeshire Flora Group meetings. In addition, the Cambridge Natural History Society field meetings invariably

included botanical recording. A county newsletter circulated news, meeting reports and excursion plans to the local community.

v.c.30, Bedfordshire, John Wakely



T. x mirabilis, Cambridgeshire
(Vince Lea)

2019 was spent searching for remaining 'missing' taxa not found since 1999. Success was limited, largely due to factors previously noted. Seven field trips were held during the season. The county RPR update is near completion, providing a focus for activity in 2020. NCRs were *Tragopogon x mirabilis* (*T. porrifolius* x *T. pratensis*), *Sorbus croceocarpa* (Orange Whitebeam) (naturalised/self-sown)

v.c.32, Northamptonshire, Alyson Freeman

Atlas 2020 recording continued apace in 2019, targeting tetrads with few or no records. Quite a few records for previous years were also gathered in, resulting in excellent coverage for the vice-county and all targets achieved. It was very helpful to have some recorders sending in records on Excel spreadsheets. Atlas 2020 digitisation and validation: the main bulk of the records were uploaded by the end of 2019, with just a few outstanding. Validation had started but still plenty to do. Local initiatives: Field meetings of the Northamptonshire Flora Group were held throughout the

year. In January we trialled Poland's Field Key to Winter Twigs at Southey Wood. Between March and July we held 7 full day field meetings, concentrating on poorly recorded villages. A few of us attended Bioblitzes at Yarwell Quarry in April and in June. We welcomed several new members to the group, and the Facebook page showed plenty of activity. I completed my 6th year as a tutor on the Identiplant course, while Brian Laney led a wild flower walk at Irchester Country Park in July and delivered talks at the Northamptonshire Biological Recording Conference and for the Rutland Natural History Society. We were excited to find *Equisetum variegatum* (Variegated Horsetail) (NCR) and *Cerastium pumilum* (Dwarf Mouse-ear). *Laphangium luteoalbum* (Jersey Cudweed) has reappeared in several locations after 30 years' absence, while *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (Four-leaved Allseed) has proved persistent in the middle of Peterborough.



Polycarpon tetraphyllum is a street weed outside Jonathan Shanklin's house in Cambridge.

v.c.33, East Gloucestershire, Christopher Dixon

A total of 27,195 records were collected in East Gloucestershire during 2019, spread quite evenly across the recording season. Nearly 12,000 of the records from 2019 (as well as similar numbers of records from recent years) were validated before the year's end. As in previous years, a large proportion of the recording was carried out under the aegis of the Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society; the most prolific recorders were John S. Rees, Mark & Clare Kitchen, Clive M. Lovatt and Christopher J. Dixon, who were together responsible for over 95% of the vice-county's records. Deliberate efforts were made to survey areas that had not been recently visited in order to improve our geographical coverage for Atlas 2020. A total of 235 monads received more than 30 records over the year, which equates to more than 13% of the vice-county's area. Notable finds included the discovery of *Dittrichia graveolens* (Stinking Fleabane) by Paul Stanley at two sites along the M5, mirroring the species' distribution along other UK motorways, and a population of *Scutellaria altissima* (Somerset Skullcap) in a field margin, over 50 km from its nearest known occurrence; these two were among 30 species recorded in the vice-county for the first time.

v.c.34, West Gloucestershire, Clive M Lovatt

The Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society (GNS) held eight Plant Group field meetings wholly or partly in v.c.34 whilst the Bristol Naturalists' Society (BNS) held five field meetings and three indoors. Attendance was usually about 8. Two BioBlitzes were attended and two invited surveys were completed.

GNS publishes the annual list of worthy Gloucestershire plant records, written by Clare and Mark Kitchen, the previous BSBI recorders, and the undersigned. The 2019 list has 20 new v.c. records, mostly garden escapes but

including two *Euphrasia* (Eyebright) hybrids kindly determined by the BSBI referee, Chris Metherell, one being only previously known in v.c.6. The BNS Bulletin (10 issues) includes reports of their meetings, new plant records, and notes on old botanists. v.c.34 had another record-breaking year in 2019 with about 35,000 records added to the BSBI database, mainly from three sources. Notable was the re-appearance west of Severn of *Limonium vulgare* (Common Sea-lavender). Over 10,000 accumulated records came from occasional recorders wanting to make a mark on Atlas 2020. We worked with neighbouring recorders to eliminate some boundary misallocations. Whilst filling some of the white areas in the coverage map, and keeping busy the BSBI referees for Cotoneaster, *Hieracium* and *Euphrasia*, we now intend to work on our own projects held in abeyance in the run-up to Atlas 2020. I have 100 pages of typescript for the Historical Flora of the Avon Gorge and a rare plant register for the county is much needed.

v.c.38, Warwickshire, John Walton

Our validation is up-to-date, and all records have been sent in for Atlas 2020. We participated in the New Year Plant Hunt with over twenty people attending, we have organized a Field Meeting for 2020 for our county. During 2019 we held 17 local recording meetings and run an indoor meeting on Conifer Identification.

v.c.39, Staffordshire, John Hawksford

All records received have been entered into MapMate and, hence, the BSBI Distribution database. There were 13,040 of them. 19 individuals provided substantial lists; 11 shorter ones; and 48 a few records. There are 49 hectads or part-hectads in the vice county. Final Atlas 2020 totals for them and their individual tetrads reached satisfactory values: after targeting those few that had previously fallen short of



Lythrum hyssopifolia (Christian Fischer CC BY-SA [Wikimedia Commons](#))

75% targets. The vast majority of validation has been completed for the priority categories: boundary matches, singleton anomalies, rarities and altitude ranges. The Annual Plant Report has been prepared and posted on the Staffordshire page of the BSBI website. Plant identification and other queries received in e-mails and the post have all been answered in detail. Detailed comparisons and collaboration has been undertaken with the work of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Survey Teams

and Staffordshire Ecological Record. *Carduus acanthoides* (Broad-winged Thistle) was found on waste ground in Lichfield, SK1210; *Lythrum hyssopifolia* (Grass-poly) on Jubilee Wetlands, SP2099; and *Rosa micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar) at Stone Cross, SP0194.

v.c.53, South Lincolnshire, Sarah Lambert

By the end of 2019 we had exceeded our revised target of ten well-recorded tetrads per hectad, and had achieved re-find levels over 75% in 60% of hectads, with another 16% achieving 70 to 74%. A total of just under 40,000 records were made and over 65,000 records were entered into the BSBI DDb. Digitisation of records has progressed well, though some older data were outstanding at the end of the

year including half of the Lincolnshire LWS survey data covering the period 2008-2010. The South Lincolnshire Flora Group has 55 people on the mailing list and 62 members of the Facebook group. We held nine field meetings and a successful NYPH in Sleaford, as well as a joint NYPH in Stamford with the Northamptonshire Flora Group. We also held a winter social and planning meeting in March. The SLFG has continued to support the 'Love Lincs Plants' project and collected over 220 herbarium specimens in 2019. We helped to organise and run a Bramble Workshop for the project, which was led by Alex Prendergast. The group has now decided to start work on a Rare Plants register for v.c.53 and to continue monad recording for a new 'Flora of Lincolnshire' to be published with the Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union. In August 2019 Malcolm Pool found *Eryngium campestre* (Field Eryngo) on a verge of the A1 just north of Grantham. Reports of field trips and other interesting finds are publicised in our newsletter which is circulated to all members.



Eryngium campestre (South Lincolnshire Newsletter)

v.c.55, Leicestershire, Geoffrey Hall

Our aim for the last five years has been to produce the minimum required for the Atlas - five well-recorded tetrads per hectad - which we finally achieved on 28th December, following a visit to Ryhall (TF01F). We didn't make 75% coverage in 7/40 hectads, although all are more than 71% well-recorded. Record digitisation has been completed with 35,861 records added for 2019, and an additional 37,721 pre-2019 records. The total added since 2000 is 386,214 records. Validation is proceeding and mostly concerns records on boundaries of adjoining v.cc.. The RPR needs to be updated, and we probably have enough data to produce a new one in the near future. We organised a New Year Plant Hunt and six meetings for local botanists, participated in the Leicester City Bioblitz, gave talks and presented posters at the Leicestershire Recorders Conference, and gave talks to local natural history societies. We organised a four-day meeting in Rutland to improve coverage and invited local naturalists to record with us. Steve Woodward and Geoffrey Hall were invited to join the Advisory Group of the Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre, and Geoffrey Hall has joined the Conservation Committee of the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust, of which Steve is already a member. We have made some contacts with local farmers and landowners, and have surveyed private land for some of them. The most significant finds are *Carex x haussknechtii* (2nd British record), *Pyrola rotundifolia* ssp. *rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Wintergreen: FCR) and *Sison segetum* (Corn Parsley, last record 1967).

v.c.56, Nottinghamshire, Mark Woods

Another busy year with more than 50,000 records submitted. No targets were set, but sufficient data was gathered to ensure thorough coverage of all hectads in the county. Information on the database has been checked and

it is hoped that validation is near completion. Important records have been checked and duplicates examined. Other Activities: Third edition of the RPR is planned for 2020. Field data is ready for updating the spreadsheet and the PDF document. 2013 checklist for Nottinghamshire is being updated and is based on the Atlas work G. Coles and S. Matthews have been carrying out historical research to identify first records and the history of botanical surveying in Nottinghamshire. K. Widdowson has been carrying out taxonomic research and his work will soon be put on the county web-page. Species re-introduction work continues apace with heathland species being targeted for re-introduction to former sites. Steered by Species reintroduction Forum for Nottinghamshire. New County Records: *Bistorta affinis* (Himalayan Fleecflower), [6 October 2019, SK564579, Lindhurst Track]; *Bupleurum rotundifolium* (Thorow-wax), [10 June 2018, SK61263084 Keyworth]; *Clarkia unguiculata* (Clarkia), [7 April 2019, SK550415 Bobbers Mill]; *Cyrtomium fortunei* (Fortune's Holly-fern), [17 Jul 2019, SK634456 Lambley Lane Stream]; *Euphorbia dulcis* (Sweet Spurge), [6 May 2019, SK547391. University of Nottingham]; *Gastridium ventricosum* (Nit-grass), [4 August 2019, SK771894, Saundby]; *Lolium x boucheanum* (*L. perenne* x *multiflorum*), [17 July 2019, SK624441, Lambley Field]; *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* [27 May 2019, SK530367, Beeston Bus Station]; *Ruta graveolens* (Rue), [21 September 2019, SK640351, Cotgrave]; *Sisymbrium irio* (London-rocket), [9 March 2019, SK793538, Newark-on-Trent Lock].

v.c.57, Derbyshire, Alan Willmot

We started the final recording season for Atlas 2020 with 10 hectads out of our 42 at less than the 75% refind rate, so we targeted these over the year. Our efforts were quite successful here as we managed to raise all but one hectad to the magic 75% refind rate. This was SK14 which was

where our long-time county recorder Miss Hollick used to live and botanise. She had covered her home patch exhaustively and we were not able to refind many of her rarities, especially those she recorded as growing in her garden! By the end of the year virtually all records were digitised, and similarly virtually all records flagged up for validation had been looked at. Our local group continues to meet and attract new members with the Atlas 2020 project forming a very useful focus for us to work round. Conversely, the absence of a new national project, and a substitute local one, has left many of the group asking what

we are to do next. We continued to record new species for the vice-county, the vast majority of which were neophytes probably overlooked earlier as not worth recording. There were, however, a couple of species which may be genuine recent additions to the county, though still neophytes.



Cardamine occulta, Dunstan Garden Centre (M Lacey)

These included *Cardamine occulta* (Asian Bittercress) and *Galium murale* (Small Cleavers).

v.c.61, S.E. Yorkshire, Rohan Lewis

Atlas 2020 recording in v.c.61 aimed for a minimum of 20% coverage, sampling all significant habitats. We attempted to include, in each hectad, one tetrad known to be species-rich, one tetrad with good variety of habitat, one tetrad with good access, one tetrad with few previous records and one

tetrad with an unusual plant assemblage. Surveying of the 186 tetrads thus selected (average 5 per hectad) was completed in 2019, some during the six organised field meetings and others through the efforts of individual members of the East Yorkshire Botany Group. Reports on the field meetings are on the v.c.61 website. The v.c. recorders are members of the East Riding Local Wildlife Sites Panel, and have been supplying records to support the local authority's ecologist in progressing candidate Local Wildlife Sites.

v.c.62, N.E. Yorkshire, David Barlow

It has been somewhat of a difficult year for me as recorder as my very experienced and knowledgeable co recorder Vincent Jones has suffered from Alzheimer's. Despite this I did manage to fill in some tetrads which had no records at all. However, at the end of the year with the excellent help and hard work from members of the North East Yorkshire Botany Group we managed to have at least some records in all but 29 tetrads out of some 900. Overall with records from iRecord we managed some 37K records in 2019. All the records from 2019 were uploaded to the BSBI database before the deadline, even though I still received records on the 31st December. My task in 2020 is to update and check the existing RPR and to add resources and more material to the v.c.62 page on the BSBI web site. During the year I developed a Facebook group for the North East Yorkshire Botany Group plus anyone else interested in botany in v.c.62. At the time of writing we have 115 members. We are at present finalising our 2020 field meetings where we will hold at least one joint one with the YNU (Yorkshire Naturalists Union). Three notable finds during 2019 were. *Iris orientalis* (Turkish Iris, NCR), *Mentha cervina* (Hart's Pennyroyal, NCR), *Euphorbia paralias* (Sea Spurge, NCR and first for Yorkshire).

v.c.63, S.W. Yorkshire, Louise Hill and Kay McDowell



A frond of the *Polystichum setiferum* 'Divisilobum group' at Thornton-in-Craven.

We had a couple of successful joint meetings with Saddleworth Nats. I spent more time recording in previously unrecorded areas including hectad SD90 south west of Skipton with various helpers. Jonathan Shanklin and I found *Polystichum setiferum* 'Divisilobum group' (a Soft Shield-fern) at Thornton-in-Craven in July. Mike Canaway found *Polypodium interjectum* (Intermediate Polypody) in the Greenfields area in February this year.

v.c.65, N.W. Yorkshire, Linda Robinson

2019 was spent trying to update older records. On trip up Mickle Fell on the Pennines, *Euphrasia ostenfeldii* was found by Brian Burrow and David Tennant. The previous day it had been found over the border on Little Fell, Cumbria by John O'Reilly, these were first records for the Northern Pennines and a first for v.c.65. Other notable species were *Catabrosa aquatica* (Whorl-grass), *Dryopteris expansa* (Northern Buckler-fern), *Epilobium anagallidifolium* (Alpine Willowherb), and *Festuca rubra* ssp. *arctica*. Natural England contacted us requesting help in surveying the *Neotinea ustulata* (Burnt Orchid) population on Low Wanless Farm, Wensleydale. We surveyed four fields and found a total of 76 spikes, not up to the 300+ that Mike

Porter and Michael Foley found in the 1980's, but a good population nonetheless considering its severe decline and extinction elsewhere in the v.c. We were contacted by Andrew Jones and Fred Rumsey who had been looking at *Myosotis ramosissima* (Early Forget-me-not) specimens in various Herbaria. They identified two specimens as *Mysotis stricta* (Small-flowered Forget-me-not), not previously recorded in Britain. One specimen from Sandscale in Cumbria, the other from West Burton, v.c.65. After thoroughly searching, slightly late in the season we came up with nothing but Pete Burton in Cumbria found a small population at Sandscale. A good new addition to the British Flora. We will be searching again this year. After a dramatic decline in the Upper Teesdale assemblage, Dr. Margaret Bradshaw has formed a Conservation Trust working with Natural England to try and reverse this. Details on Facebook Page and at '[Friends of Teesdale Flora](#)'.

v.c.66, County Durham, Keith Robson

Having taken over as county recorder only at the start of the last year of Atlas recording it has been somewhat of a challenge. Fortunately, a great deal had been done, much of it thanks to the previous county recorder, John Durkin. In 2019 I was committed to finishing off some survey work within the county on the A19 grass verges but this produced many useful records. There are only a small number of active recorders in v.c.66 and many of them have been working on various projects in the western dales, particularly Upper Teesdale. This meant that these areas have been well covered so it has been the urban east coast and some of the central arable floodplains that needed to be concentrated on in 2019. Durham Botany Group was formed late 2018 and has grown to over 150 members. It has an active Facebook page, and now a [website](#). Notable Records in 2019 *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (Four-leaved Allseed) – Cobbled street in Darlington NCR (det John

Mason), *Rorippa islandica* (Northern Yellow-cress) – disused quarry in upper Teesdale. - 2nd county record (det Tim Rich), *Viscum album* (Mistletoe) - 2016 produced the first county record since 1971, with another 2 records in 2018 and 2 more in 2019.



Gagea lutea (Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem)
at Gainford (Durham Botany Group)

v.c.67, South Northumberland, John Richards

There was a significant push in the county to record monads in areas of the county with poor recent coverage. All 2019 records have now been digitised and thanks are particularly due to Megs Rogers and her team of volunteers for accomplishing this. Significant data sets from the Kielder and Wark forests and from the MOD ranges have also been entered. Some validation work has been completed, including iRecord data sets until June 2019, but the final sets remain. A flurry of new records resulting from 2020

Atlas work has encouraged the updating of our RPR. This has now been completed in draft, but needs to be indexed. It is hoped that it may result in a publication as well as an on-line presence in the Flora North-east website. Amongst exciting new finds in south Northumberland was a new stand of well over 500 *Crepis mollis* (Northern Hawk's-beard), possibly containing half the plants in the country.



Ornithopus perpusillus, Gamlingay, v.c.29 (Peter Leonard)

The rediscovery of a site with many tens of thousands of *Paris quadrifolia* (Herb-paris) (with *Trollius europaeus* (Globeflower), *Neottia nidus-avis* (Bird's-nest Orchid) and *Rubus saxatilis* (Stone Bramble)) also stays in the mind. Two upland specials were *Cochlearia pyrenaica* ssp. *alpina* (NCR) and the second record for *Salix caprea* ssp. *sphacelata*. Neither of *Valerianella carinata* (Keeled-fruited Cornsalad) or *Ornithopus perpusillus* (Bird's-foot) had been recorded for two centuries, but the most exciting southern invader is *Polycarpon tetraphyllum*, colonising urban streets in North Shields. *Lamium hybridum* (Cut-leaved Dead-

nettle) and *Lactuca serriola* (Prickly Lettuce) are also being found with increasing regularity. Nevertheless, pride of place might go to a new record for the UK, *Vicia dumetorum* at the Low Hauxley Nature Reserve.

v.c.68, North Northumberland, Chris Metherell

Nothing particularly astounding to report. We continued to track down pre-2000 records and have finally achieved a better than 87% refind rate. We have covered virtually the whole v.c. at tetrad level over the last few years.

v.c.69, Westmorland, Mike Porter

The final year of Atlas recording saw our recorders - teams and individuals - working furiously to complete coverage of the county of Cumbria... as far as humanly possible! Problems arose inevitably in that in almost every case the last remaining pockets of 'unsurveyed' land were



Myosurus minimus, Swavesey,
v.c.29 (Jonathan Shanklin)

inaccessible upland moors and mountains, involving long walks in over rough ground, and often with long drives even to get near them. Such days usually produced few records, but at least "got dots on the map". The prodigious amount of work done by our record man, Phill Brown, both in recording and entering everyone's records, should be noted. Many of our records came from a well-attended series of 7 field meetings organised for the Flora of

Cumbria Recording Group and we also contributed our collective expertise to field meetings held by the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre. We encouraged interest in plants with our Cumbria Botany Facebook site (461 members) and treated BSBI members to the delights of the sedges of Roudsea Wood – in continuous heavy rain! Work on updating the RPR and the county flora was discussed but had to be postponed until after the field work for Atlas 2020. The best records were a small number of plants of *Myosotis stricta* found at Sandscale Haws following the correction of the re-determination of a 1914 record (!), a thriving patch of *Myosurus minimus* (Mousetail) and a new site for the declining *Eleocharis mamillata* subsp. *austriaca* (Northern Spike-rush) in a remote abandoned quarry.

v.c.113a, Jersey, Anne Haden

It has been another busy year. All the monads on the island have been visited during the year and well recorded. A total



Plantago afra (Krzysztof Ziarnik
CC BY-SA [Wikimedia Commons](#))

of six new records were made for the island including *Plantago afra* (Glandular Plantain) and *Ehrharta erecta* (Panic Veldtgrass). One area that had not been recorded before is the airport and thanks to one of the firemen a trip round the perimeter of the of the airfield some interesting plants were recorded such a large population of *Kickxia elatine* (Sharp-leaved Fluellen). The 2 squares for NPMS continued to

be recorded. The Botany Section of the Societe Jersiaise went on fortnightly outings, including two sites not visited before. A visit from the Wildflower Society yielded some interesting records. Jersey is updating its Wildlife Law and the Botany Section advised on the status of the 67 protected plants on the island. Also the Section took part in a campaign to improve roadside and verge cutting known locally as 'branchage' and is undertaken by landowners.

v.c.113b, Guernsey, Helen Litchfield

Working in conjunction with the Botany Section of La Société Guernesiaise our almost weekly expeditions have been scrupulously recorded and submitted. Towards the end of the year, I was pleased to be asked to assist in surveying Areas of Biodiversity Importance. This gave us access to several new areas of land. However, as surveying didn't start until October it is assumed that many plants have been unrecorded and agreement was secured to re-survey some areas in Spring. 2020 will be another busy year for the Botany group. The island welcomed Chris Packham in May as part of a Pollinator Project initiative and we were delighted that he subsequently 'tweeted' photographs of our fabulous Orchid Fields in full bloom to his thousands of followers. Building on the work of previous botanists, our "Check List of Guernsey Plants" was digitalised and a button added to La Société Guernesiaise Website Botany page so that this important data can be accessed by everyone at the click of a button. We have included on the same spreadsheet details of whether these plants are held in our two herbariums and where.

Thanks to Pete Stroh and Jim McIntosh for compiling these reports.

New and interesting County Records

This section aims to provide reports of new county records of native species, re-finds of species thought to be extinct for at least 50 years and finds of alien species that illustrate a significant range expansion or identification feature. Information on other county records, of local hectad records etc will be available from vice-county recorders or through the DDb. Contributions with images are welcome.

v.c.29, Cambridgeshire, Jonathan Shanklin

Taraxacum spp.



John Richards determined seven new Dandelion species for the county at Wicken Fen during the BSBI *Taraxacum* workshop on 2019 May 4. These were *T. disseminatum*, *T. hamatulum*, *T. mimulum*, *T. obtusifrons*, *T. oellgaardii*, *T. pruinaum* and *T. retroflexum*. The richness of the finds at a single site on a short excursion shows how under-recorded our *Taraxacum* flora is. The image at left shows the

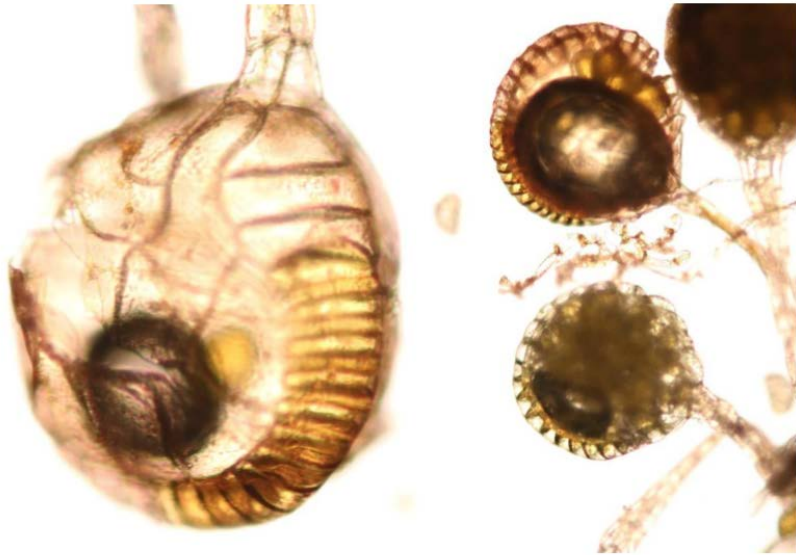
taraxacologists on the Devil's Ditch, which, surprisingly, did not produce any first or second county records. For more details of these records and records of other interesting species and aliens in the county see [Nature in Cambridgeshire](#).

Campanula rapunculus (Rampion Bellflower).

One large flowering plant, found by Steve Hartley, det. Alan Leslie, in grassland on the south-eastern side of a small copse, on the north-eastern side of the railway, Coldham's Common, Cambridge, TL47565636, 1 July 2019 (CGE, coll. ACL, 2 July). The plant is usually a biennial herb, which is occasionally cultivated both as an ornament and as a salad vegetable; its origin in this case was unclear.

Polypodium cambricum (Southern Polypody).

Found by Alan Leslie, who reports: "A small clump, with several fronds (some of which were fertile), at the top of the corner where two tall brick walls meet, at the south-east corner of the car park for the business units between Gwydir Street and Mill Road cemetery, Cambridge, TL46255829, 4 March 2020 (CGE). I first saw it here on 17 October 2013, but at that time it was not fertile and I had rather forgotten its potential until visiting the bookbinder in the business units recently. I asked Chris Preston to look at the sporangia and he reports that they have 3 basal cells (see his images), there are sparse paraphyses, and the spores are well-formed; the number of indurated annulus cells is unusually high at 9-13(-17) with a mean of 11.8, but following consultation with Fred Rumsey it seems that whilst this is a high number, it is not unknown. The gross morphological feature also fit this determination as the fronds are relatively short and broad, with long narrow pinnae, at least some of which have toothed margins, and the new fronds still look very fresh (so were probably produced late in the season last year. One can not be sure of its ultimate origin of course as *P. cambricum* is grown in some Cambridge gardens, but its persistence here on a wall may be another reflection of our milder winters."



Three basal cells (left) and branched paraphysis between two sporangia (right)

Micrograph (Chris Preston)

Whilst relatively common in the west and south, the plant is very rare in the east. The next closest location is in East Suffolk, just west of Ipswich and some 65km away.

Sisymbrium irio (London Rocket).

One plant, found by Alan Leslie, at the base of a wire fence bordering the footpath on the north side of Coldham's Lane, Cambridge, on the western approach to the bridge over the railway TL46755875, 27 March 2020 **CGE**.

Alan noted in his Flora that the plant had only ever been reported from two locations in the county. It was first recorded from an old wall along North Brink, near Barton Lane in Wisbech by W Skrimshire in 1797 and it was still in the same area in 1829 when it was last seen in the county. The only other record was from Barnwell, Cambridge where

J Watson found it in 1818. This location is not far from where Alan found it over 200 years later.



Sisymbrium irio, Cambridge (Jonathan Shanklin)

v.c.38, Warwickshire, John Walton

While taking our “essential exercise” area around our village of Baddesley Ensor in North Warwickshire we have seen a surprising explosion of *Barbarea intermedia* (Medium-flowered Winter-cress). The warm April weather has encouraged it to turn up in arable fields, front gardens and a churchyard with five new sites within just a few square miles.

The first county record of *Moenchia erecta* (Upright Chickweed) for 121 years was found on 26 April at the Atherstone Golf Course. Atherstone Outwoods, where the golf course is now, was the site of the original first county record by A. Bloxham in 1859. The closure by Covid-19 has allowed us plenty of time to examine carefully the short turf on the sandy banks beside the fairways, where hundreds of

plants were seen. They were accompanied by plenty of *Aira caryophyllea* (Silver Hair-grass) and *Montia fontana* ssp. *chondrosperma* (Blinks) both rare, like their habitats, in this part of the county.



Scilla sardensis
(John Walton)

Leam Valley Nature Reserve is an extension of a very busy local park near Leamington Spa full of people playing rugby and walking dogs. It seemed strange that nobody had noticed the tens of thousands of *Scilla* plants naturalized in the woodland by the River Leam before. A glorious blue carpet, probably thought to be a few early bluebells by the local population, were of *Scilla sardensis* (Lesser Glory-of-the Snow). As there are many

different *Scilla* species in cultivation and identification is not easy, we were glad of the help that came from Bastiaan Brak, who initially reported them. He had used the [Dutch equivalent of our Plant Crib](#), which highlights the comparative length of the tepal tube against the full flower length to separate this species from *S. forbesii*. Peter Coxhead from the local AGS group also suggested a beautifully photographed website from the RHS entitled [Little Blue Bulbs](#) for comparison.

Hints & Tips

If it looks like a chickweed – *Stellaria media* look-alikes. Richard Carter, courtesy the Norfolk newsletter



Stellaria media (Mark Hows)

The familiar – gardeners might say all too familiar - *Stellaria media* (Common Chickweed) is a variable species growing on a wide range of substrates. Seldom, though, will we see it and wonder what it is, except perhaps very occasionally on wall-tops where dainty and upright forms (normally it

sprawls) can look like members of other genera in the *Caryophyllaceae*, e.g. *Arenaria serpyllifolia* (Thyme-leaved Sandwort). On those occasions, the fact that *Stellaria media* has lower-stem hairs concentrated into a single distinct line is enough to dispel any doubts.

There are, however, several members of the genus *Stellaria* that look sufficiently like *Stellaria media* to be overlooked for it. So, what are they?

The two large-flowered species that we call Stitchworts – *Stellaria holostea* (Greater Stitchwort) and *Stellaria graminea* (Lesser Stitchwort) both have non-petiolate (i.e. unstalked) leaves that are linear-lanceolate, so there is little chance of confusing them with *Stellaria media*. The same applies to the much rarer *Stellaria palustris* (Marsh Stitchwort), which usually has a bluish-green appearance.

These three are so different from the other *Stellaria* species that in the fourth edition of Stace's Flora it says they are likely to be separated into a new genus before much longer (presumably pending DNA work).

Two other species tend to have distinctly larger flowers than *Stellaria media* but otherwise resemble it in the architecture of the flower and in the shape and general look of the leaves. *Stellaria aquaticum* (Water Chickweed) – this is the one we used to know as *Myoston aquaticum* but now it has moved to *Stellaria* it seems strange that we didn't always wonder why it wasn't there, seeing that it looks so very much like a *Stellaria*. But it has five styles in the flower instead of three, which quickly and easily distinguishes it from all other *Stellaria* species including *Stellaria media*. When not flowering it will usually be given away by its large size and waterside location, and it can be checked by the hairless base of the stem, which lacks the line of hairs characteristic of *Stellaria media* (though there are glandular hairs in the upper parts of the plant). Wood Stitchwort is unlikely in Norfolk being a more northern species of watersides in woods. It is a strikingly graceful plant that you would never confuse with *Stellaria media* – a sort of aristocratic relative.

The delicate *Stellaria alsine* (Bog Stitchwort) – a plant common in Norfolk in wet grassland generally – is easily distinguished from other *Stellaria* species by being completely hairless. Its leaves are somewhat parallel sided and do not look at all like those of *Stellaria media*.

Which pretty much leaves us with the two (or tantalisingly perhaps three) *Stellaria* species that you can easily overlook in error for *Stellaria media*. First, on paths or on free-draining and nutrient-poor substrates in very early spring we sometimes find sprawling yellow-green patches of what looks like small *Stellaria media* with unopened or



Stellaria pallida (Jo Parmenter)

malformed flowers. Often that is exactly what it is. But often too it is *Stellaria pallida*, which is distinguished from *Stellaria media* by usually lacking petals, by having sepals less than 3 mm (versus more than 3 mm) and by having 1-3 stamens versus 3-8 – easy, except of course that it's like

Schrodinger's Cat. The two theoretical states '3 or less stamens' or '3 or more stamens' are both true until your act of taking the trouble to look collapses them into the observed state '3 stamens', at least in plants that look as if they might be *Stellaria pallida*. But usually with a bit of persistence we can find enough evidence to decide between the two species. Records of *Stellaria pallida* become steadily less plausible as the spring advances. By April the plant is usually dying off but still identifiable. If you are puzzling about a plant in May, it's probably *Stellaria media* – but beware of Breckland forestry rides where *Stellaria pallida* seems to persist longer than elsewhere and can just survive through to June.

Even more easily overlooked is *Stellaria neglecta* (Greater Chickweed) which is very much like *Stellaria media*



Stellaria neglecta (Jo Parmenter)

in general appearance but bigger – sepals 5-6.5 mm (versus less than 5 mm in *Stellaria media*), stamens 8 or more, and seeds 1.3 mm in diameter or more (1.3 mm less in *Stellaria media*). Plants in the ‘overlap zone’ are common and when dealing with ‘gradient-of-size-or-number’ characters like this we are generally reluctant to go for a record of the less common *Stellaria neglecta*. It may well be one of the most under-recorded plants in Norfolk. According to Stace’s Flora it may have a preference for shady and damp places, but it is worth looking for more widely.

And now there is a third possibility drawn to the attention of BSBI members a few weeks ago by Fred Rumsey at the England AGM – a new species described last year from central Europe where it is spreading. It isn’t in Stace 4 (post-dating it) and it has not yet been recorded from the UK but could account for some of our puzzle plants on the fringes between *Stellaria media* and both *Stellaria pallida* on the one hand and *Stellaria neglecta* on the other.

The new *Stellaria ruderalis* is an allotetraploid species derived from the hybrid between *Stellaria pallida* and *Stellaria neglecta*. Since we have just seen that these two species span *Stellaria media* in terms of size, we might guess what this new species might look very like! Actually it isn’t that easily confused with *Stellaria pallida* but rather is intermediate between *Stellaria media* and *Stellaria neglecta*. It seems that the jizz-character to look out for is reflexed branches in the inflorescence (a bit like *Cerastium semidecandrum* I presume) - in this it differs from both *Stellaria media* and *Stellaria neglecta*. Otherwise it differs from *Stellaria neglecta* in having fewer stamens (3-5 versus 8-10), a more condensed inflorescences with stouter branches, shorter petals, a pale yellow-green colour, and paler seeds with fewer papillae. And it differs from *Stellaria*

media in its upright habit (to 80 cm) and longer, more conical tubercles on the seeds. So over to you – can you be the first to find this plant in the UK?

Some frequent abbreviations:

ASM	The BSBI Annual Spring or Summer Meeting
BIB	<i>British & Irish Botany</i>
CEH	Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
CGE	Cambridge University Herbarium
DDb	BSBI Distribution Data-base
E&C	BSBI Events & Communications Committee
LRC	Local (Environmental) Records Centre
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local (or County) Wildlife Site
NCR	New County Record
NPMS	National Plant Monitoring Scheme
Pubs	BSBI Publications Committee
RPR	Rare Plant Register
R&R	BSBI Records & Research Committee
T&E	BSBI Training & Education Committee
VCR	Vice-county Recorder



Gentiana verna (Spring Gentian), Upper Teesdale (Falgune Sarker)

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland Committee for England Constitution.

1. Name

The name of the Committee shall be “The BSBI Committee for England”.

2. Status

The Committee shall act under the aegis of the BSBI and shall function as the Society’s English country Committee.

3. Constitution

This constitution is set out by the Trustees of the BSBI, in furtherance of the powers provided to them in the Articles of Association of the BSBI. No amendment to this constitution shall be made other than by the Trustees for the time being of the BSBI on the advice of and in consultation with such of its members as shall be resident in England, the Channel Islands or Isle of Man.

4. Objects

- a. To further, in England, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, the aims and objectives of the BSBI, as set out in its Memorandum of Association and Articles.
- b. To provide liaison between the BSBI and other bodies with similar or allied interests in England, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

5. Composition

The Committee shall consist of the following, who must be members of the BSBI:

- a. Chair;
- b. Secretary;
- c. Up to eight additional elected members;
- d. Up to 2 co-opted members.

Additionally, if a Chair Elect has been elected at an Annual General Meeting, that person shall also be a member of the Committee. The Committee may invite the attendance of such representatives of appropriate organisations from time to time as they see fit.

The BSBI President, Honorary General Secretary and Honorary Treasurer shall be members, *ex officio*. The Head of Operations and England Officer (if appointed) shall be invited to attend meetings.

The Committee may ask individual Committee members to take responsibility for such specific areas of the Committee's work as they see fit.

6. General Meetings

- a) There shall be at least one General Meeting for eligible members in a calendar year and one shall be the Annual General Meeting.
- b) General Meetings are called with at least 14 and not more than 28 clear days' written notice.
- c) BSBI members normally resident in England, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are entitled to attend and vote at General Meetings.
- d) There is a quorum at General Meetings if the number of voting members present in person is at least 15.
- e) The chair at a General Meeting shall be the chair of the committee or in default any committee member present and elected by the voting members present.

f) Every issue, including any elections which may be necessary, shall be decided on a show of hands by the voting members present in person, each having one vote on each issue and by a simple majority.

g) The secretary shall prepare or cause to be prepared draft minutes of each General Meeting as soon as possible after the meeting and shall provide a copy to the Hon. General Secretary of the BSBI and the Communications Officer together with a summary, no later than three weeks after the meeting. Such minutes shall be approved, if necessary in amended form, at the next General Meeting.

7. Nominations, elections and ancillary matters

a. Nominations for membership of the Committee shall be in writing, with the candidate's consent, and signed by two members entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting as above, to be in the hands of the Committee secretary at least 28 days before the Annual General Meeting.

b. In the event of insufficient nominations the Committee shall have the power to nominate additional candidates at the Annual General Meeting.

c. The Chair shall be elected to serve for two years and be eligible for re-election for a further two years. Thereafter they shall not be eligible for re-election as chair until the expiry of one year.

d. A Chair Elect, may be elected to serve for one year, their election taking place at the Annual General Meeting immediately preceding that at which the current Chair is due to retire.

e. The other members of the Committee shall be elected to serve for three years and be eligible for re-election for a further three years. Thereafter they shall not be eligible for re-election until the expiry of one year.

f. One third of the Committee members shall retire at each Annual General Meeting, those longest in office (where applicable, since re-election) retiring first and the choice between any of equal service being made by drawing lots at the last meeting of the Committee in any year.

g. The Committee shall have the power to co-opt up to two members but a co-opted member shall only hold office until the next AGM when they must either offer themselves for election or stand down.

8. Committee Proceedings

The committee must hold at least two meetings each year.

a. A quorum at a meeting of the Committee is at least five or one half of the members of the committee (if greater), save that co-opted members shall not count towards the quorum.

b. A meeting of the Committee may be held either in person or by suitable electronic means agreed by the committee in which all participants may communicate with all the other participants but at least one meeting in each year must be held in person.

c. The Chair or (if the Chair is unable or unwilling to do so) some other committee member chosen by the Committee present shall preside at each meeting.

d. Any issue may be determined by a simple majority of the votes cast at a Committee meeting, but a resolution in writing agreed by all the committee is as valid as a resolution passed at a meeting. For this purpose the resolution may be contained in more than one document.

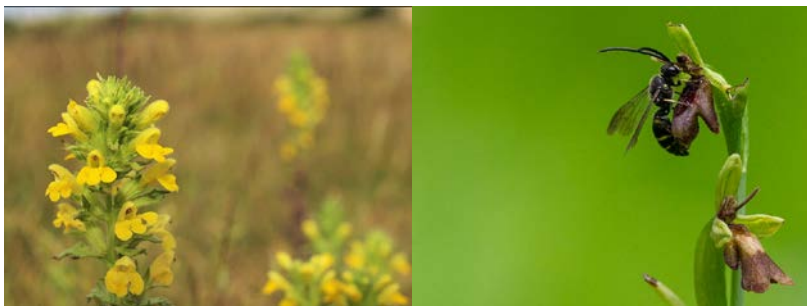
e. Every Committee member has one vote on each issue but, in case of equality of votes, the chair of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

f. The secretary shall prepare or cause to be prepared draft minutes of each meeting as soon as possible after the meeting and shall provide a copy to the Hon. General Secretary and Communications Officer of the BSBI together with a summary, no later than three weeks after the meeting. Such minutes shall be approved, if necessary in amended form, at the next meeting of the Committee.

Picture Gallery



Polypodium cambricum, Cambridge (Chris Preston)



Parentucellia viscosa (Yellow Bartsia), South Devon (Phil Sansum)

Ophrys insectifera (Fly Orchid), Yockletts Bank, Kent (Isabel Hardman)



Viola canina subsp. *canina* (Heath Dog-violet),
Braunton Burrows (Mary Breeds)



Taraxacologists at Ickworth, Suffolk (Tim Rich)



Lobelia urens (Heath Lobelia), South Devon (Phil Sansum)



Geum rivale (Water Avens), Northumberland (Gordon Young)



Salvia pratensis (Meadow Clary), Ranscombe, Surrey (Fred Rumsey)