



January 2021 Sample Issue
See inside for a selection of articles from *BSBI News* no. 146 and details of how to join the BSBI. Members receive three print copies of *BSBI News* each year as part of the package of membership benefits.



CONTENTS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

FROM THE PRESIDENT / EDITORIAL	2	A super problem with the naming of British Rhododendrons <i>Richard Milne</i>	52
ARTICLES		A new identity for a naturalised Chilean <i>Oxalis</i> <i>Julian Shaw</i>	55
		Recording 'tropical' adventives in Britain and Ireland – a possible solution? <i>Alexis Fitzgerald</i>	56
	3	<i>Serapias vomeracea</i> Burm. f. (Briq.) (Long-lipped Tongue-orchid): first wild record for Britain and Ireland <i>Geoffrey Kitchener, Daphne Mills, Sue Buckingham, David Johnson & Stephen Lemon</i>	
	7	Resurrection of a Norfolk pond gem: Grass-poly <i>Lythrum hyssopifolia</i> <i>Carl Sayer & Jo Parmenter</i>	
	11	Discovery of a second extant plant of Arran's False Rowan (<i>Sorbus pseudomeinichii</i> Ashley Robertson) <i>Robert Blackhall-Miles</i>	
	15	<i>Mibora minima</i> (Early Sand-grass) on North Bull Island, Dublin – second record for Ireland <i>Melinda Lyons</i>	
	17	The mystery of Adder's-tongue (<i>Ophioglossum vulgatum</i>) in Bishop Auckland <i>Patricia Graham & David Shimwell</i>	
	21	<i>Sagina maritima</i> (Sea Pearlwort) as an inland roadside halophyte <i>Andy Amphlett</i>	
	25	Calcareous concretion associated with <i>Limonium procerum</i> (Large Sea-lavender) and storm damage resilience <i>Ivor Rees</i>	
	29	Using dash cams for recording plants on road verges <i>Alla Mashanova</i>	
	32		
INTRODUCING MY VICE-COUNTY			
	34	Outer Hebrides (v.c. 110) <i>Paul Smith</i>	
ADVENTIVES AND ALIENS			
		Adventives and Aliens News 22 <i>Compiled by Matthew Berry</i>	40
		<i>Glyceria grandis</i> S. Watson (American Manna-grass) in Surrey <i>George Hounsome</i>	48
		<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> var. <i>ampeloprasum</i> (Wild Leek) does not set seed on Flat Holm <i>Tim Rich</i>	50
	50		
		NOTICES	
		Including a report on the 2020 AEM, Panel of Vice-county Recorders and contents of <i>British & Irish Botany 2:4</i>	58
		COUNTRY ROUNDUPS	
		Botanical news from around England, Wales, Scotland & Ireland <i>Compiled by Pete Stroh</i>	61
		OBITUARIES	
		<i>Compiled by Chris Preston</i>	69
		REVIEWS	
		<i>Compiled by Clive Stace</i>	77
		LETTERS	82



Cover: *Helosciadium [Apium] repens*, (Creeping Marshwort), discovered in Suffolk in 2020 at only its second UK location. *Pete Stroh* (see article, p. 3).
Back cover: a selection of entries for the BSBI 2020 Photographic Competition (details on inside back cover)

Contributions for the next issue of *BSBI News* (no. 147) should be sent to the Editor, John Norton (john.norton@bsbi.org) by 25 February 2021.

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BSBI News reports on the latest botanical news and discoveries in Britain and Ireland.



A 'natural regeneration' approach to wild flower meadow creation results in the appearance of *Helosciadium repens* (Creeping Marshwort) in West Suffolk

IAN WOODWARD & MARK WEBSTER

In mid-June 2020, MW contacted IW about an umbellifer which had been found by a member of his conservation volunteer group in a newly created wild

Helosciadium repens (Creeping Marshwort) at Thetford, Norfolk. Pete Stroh

***Serapias vomeracea* Burm. f. (Briq.) (Long-lipped Tongue-orchid): first wild record for Britain and Ireland**

GEOFFREY KITCHENER, DAPHNE MILLS, SUE BUCKINGHAM, DAVID JOHNSON & STEPHEN LEMON



Close-up of a floret of the single plant of *Serapias vomeracea* in East Kent (v.c. 15), 27 May 2020. Photographs by Daphne Mills.

On 23 May 2020, sharp-eyed Kent Botanical Recording Group member Daphne Mills spotted a single plant of what she recognised as a Tongue-orchid, but an unfamiliar species. Consulting others brought a view that this was likely to be *Serapias vomeracea* Burm. f. (Briq.) (Long-tipped Tongue-orchid), as yet unrecorded in the British Isles other than as a deliberate introduction. A visit by Ian Denholm to its East Kent (v.c. 15) location

only consistently agreed qualitative distinction seems to be the hairiness of the proximal half of the epichile: distinctly hairy in *S. vomeracea* and subglabrous in *S. bergonii*. As clearly seen in the photographs, the Kent plant's epichile is hairy in its proximal half, so pointing to *S. vomeracea*. The main quantitative distinction is supposed to be the maximum width of the epichile: 5–7.5 mm in *S. bergonii* and >8 mm in *S. vomeracea*. ID measured four of the flowers

Discovery of a second extant plant of Arran's False Rowan (*Sorbus pseudomeinichii*)

Discovery of a second extant plant of Arran's False Rowan (*Sorbus pseudomeinichii* Ashley Robertson)

ROBERT BLACKHALL-MILES

A recent work visit to Scotland took my partner (Ben Ram) and I to the Isle of Arran (v.c 100) to visit the collection held at National Trust for Scotland's Brodick Castle and Goatfell Nature reserve. Two aims of our visit were to see revegetation work being done by the ranger team in Glen Rosa and to see all three of Arran's endemic *Sorbus* L. microspecies in Glen Catacol, in the north-west of the island.



A leaf of the newly discovered specimen of *Sorbus pseudomeinichii*. Photographs by the author.

On 15 September 2020 we visited Glen Catacol with the sole intention of observing the whitebeams and rowans growing in the valley. At the Glen Catacol trail head there is a small enclosure planted with the five taxa involved in the complex sequence of hybridisation in the evolution of the three endemic Arran *Sorbus*. This enclosure presented a perfect opportunity to familiarise ourselves with the taxa found in Glen Catacol: *S. aucuparia* L. (Rowan), *Sorbus* (L.) (Arran Whitebeam), *S. sibirica* L. (Siberian Rowan) and

grazing. This has left a single mature individual on the remainder of the Central Burn, making it somewhat

Resurrection of a Norfolk pond gem: Grass-poly *Lythrum hyssopifolia*

Resurrection of a Norfolk pond gem: Grass-poly *Lythrum hyssopifolia*

CARL SAYER & JO PARMENTER

The neat five-petalled flowers of *Lythrum hyssopifolia* (Grass-poly) that are borne singly in the plant's leaf axils. Rob Peacock



On a wet winter's day in February 2020, an aged and contorted willow is heaved from the muddy ground, exposing long-buried layers of earth once punctured by cloven hooves and churned by horse and tumbler. As the Norfolk Ponds Project team finishes one of its final farmland pond restorations of the season in the village of Heydon, the digger leaves behind a newly opened-up and gently-shelving pond at the side of an arable field

aquatica (Fine-leaved Water-dropwort) (7 ponds) and the uncommon charophytes *Tolypella glomerata* (Clustered Stonewort) (4 ponds) and *Nitella opaca* (Dark Stonewort) (1 pond) in particular. With the exception, of *Najas marina*, which likely arrived due to dispersal by wildfowl from a local shallow lake (Lansdown et al., 2016), all the other aforementioned species were undoubtedly derived from long-lived seedbanks disturbed during the restorations.



INTRODUCING MY VICE-COUNTY

Outer Hebrides (v.c. 110)

PAUL A. SMITH

Watery view of the south of North Uist. Photographs by the author.

The Outer Hebrides is the 15th largest vice-county by land area, but it represents some unique challenges. The islands are in three main inhabited groups (Lewis and Harris, which are a single land mass; the Uists; Barra and Vatersay), which therefore have transport links (ferries and planes) to the mainland. But there are so many outlying islands, island groups and fragments of the main islands that it has the most hectads of any vice-county: 89; and 20 of these are not accessible from the inhabited islands without a further boat trip. So spare a thought for the recorders trying to get some records from all the hectads during a 10-year date class – that's not likely to be feasible.

However, it is undeniable that islands have a particular draw and that people want to remember and record their experiences when they do reach them. So there are many articles describing trips to such places and giving species lists (often very short for small islands well offshore, so that a day trip costs many £ per species!). Indeed St Kilda is so much an attraction that it must have more pages written

about it than any comparably-sized area of Britain and Ireland, but with a rather short species list (see Crawley, 2017). So the least well-known parts of v.c. 110 are in fact the parts of the main, inhabited islands which are a long walk from the nearest access – particularly the central Lewis peatlands which do not even have the attraction of a hill to walk up or a coastline to visit.

I got hooked by the Outer Hebrides (as other people have before me – there are lots of examples of repeat visitors) following a BSBI field meeting in 1994, and after several years of regular holiday visits generating records I was invited to become joint Vice-county Recorder with Richard Pankhurst, later becoming sole recorder when he passed away in 2013. So for many years I have made solo trips and family holidays. It's a long way from Southampton – usually overnight with two drivers, though it takes two days to drive on your own. But I find the arrangement works well for me – I focus on recording full-time when I am there, and deal with specimens and records in my spare time when I'm

An occasional section is 'Introducing My Vice-county' where the BSBI Recorders highlight the interesting plants and habitats of their recording areas.

INTRODUCING MY VICE-COUNTY: Outer Hebrides (v.c. 110)

(Moss Campion) can be seen next to the footbridge in Uig bay (NB 049334), but also in many places round the coast. *Saxifraga oppositifolia* (Purple Saxifrage) is in the extreme SW corner of Traigh na Clibhe (NB 079364). Both of these flower early in the botanical year, in May. Loch Sgailier (NB 0835) is influenced by sand and has *Potamogeton gramineus* (and an old record for *Potamogeton crispus* [Curled Pondweed], though this has not been seen for many years). For the hardier, the Uig hills can be approached along a track belonging to the estate (only for walkers), and there are interesting species scattered among the hills, including *Saussurea alpina* (Alpine Saw-wort) and *Rubus saxatilis* (Stone Bramble), though they are not always easy to find.



Saussurea alpina (Alpine Saw-wort), *Rhodiola rosea* (Roseroot) and *Cystopteris fragilis* (Brittle Bladder-fern) on a ledge on Tahabhal, Uig.

The Outer Hebrides is a fantastic, varied vice county, and when the sun shines and the sea is blue it is incomparable. Though I confess, it does rain every now and again... so do turn up with full waterproofing, and I hope that you won't need it.

References

- Bonner, I. 2009. Anglesey plants in 2009. *BSBI Welsh Bulletin* 85 14–17.
Crawley, M.J. 2017. The Flora of St Kilda. *Hebridean Naturalist*, Supplement 1.

Paul A. Smith

Vice-county Recorder for Outer Hebrides (v.c. 110)
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Silene acaulis (Moss Campion), Timsgarry, Uig Bay.

The 'aliens' section includes a compilation of recent discoveries of the more interesting escaped and naturalised plants, followed by short articles on non-native species.

ADVENTIVES AND ALIENS: Adventives & Aliens News 22



are c. 3.5cm across (dark pink and c. 2cm across in *C. bungei*) and the winged inflated calyces (unwinged and short-tubular in *C. bungei*). Both have foetid subopposite leaves and sucker freely. See Adventives & Aliens News 18, v.c. 17. Most/all British material is var. *fargesi*.

Salvia forsskaolei L. (Indigo Woodland Sage). Studland (SZ0369381564), 7/7/2020, D. Leadbetter: one plant by grassy path at south end of Glebeland Estate. A garden plant (Lamiaceae) native to Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. A glandular hairy, little branched perennial up to 100cm tall. The flowers are violet-blue with white or yellow markings on the lower lips and deeply divided upper lips. The leaves are relatively large, ovate and with cordate bases. It is in the same section as *S. glutinosa* (Sticky Clary). There is only one other record in the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb), for v.c. 19.

V.c. 11 (S. Hants)

Euphorbia serpens Kunth (Matted Sandmat). Gosport (SU6053000197), 12/9/2020, J.A. Norton & D.R. Allan (conf. E.J. Clement): a c. 80 × 20cm patch on tarmac pavement, outside just one house on Pelham Road, plus small plant nearby on road kerb. New to v.c. 11. *E. serpens* is glabrous (including capsules), roots at the nodes, has more or less smooth seeds and entire, suborbicular leaves. John Norton recognised it immediately being familiar with it in the Arabian Gulf, where it is a common species in big cities in irrigated flower beds. A native of tropical America, it is most likely as a 'container alien' (particularly potted olives and palms from southern Europe), but has also been associated with bird-seed and wool waste (shoddy). There is a fine account of nine different species of 'sandmat' (syn. *Chamaesyce*), including *E. serpens*, only five of which are currently known for Britain and Ireland, in *Essex Botany* No. 10, Winter 2019, pp. 12–18.

V.c. 12 (N. Hants)

Euphorbia corallioides (Coral Spurge). Littleton (SU454329), 13/4/2020, D.J. Pearson (comm. A. Mundell): in Church Lane. The second v.c. 12 record, the first being for 2010.



Euphorbia serpens, Gosport, South Hampshire (v.c. 11). Top: plant in situ; bottom: underside of shoot showing capsules and flower. John Norton



Salvia forsskaolei, Studland, Dorset (v.c. 9). David Leadbetter

Glyceria grandis (American Manna-grass) in Surrey

Glyceria grandis S. Watson (American Manna-grass) in Surrey

GEORGE HOUNSOME



A super problem with the naming of British Rhododendrons

RICHARD MILNE

Rhododendron ponticum has been, famously, a conservation headache in Britain for many decades. Recently, however, a new and wholly avoidable problem has arisen with this species: one of naming. The problem stems from Cullen's (2011) decision to name hybridized British material of this species as '*R. × superponticum*'. Unfortunately this unhelpful name has increasingly found its way into the literature, and even Stace (2019) felt compelled to include it.

To see the trouble this has caused, simply read the article on botanical 'thugs' by Pearman et al. (2019) in *BSBI News* 142. Here, Ian Bernallick lists '*Rhododendron × superponticum*' as an invasive pest

for Cornwall, whereas Bryan Edwards states that invasive Rhodies in Dorset are *Rhododendron ponticum*. Anyone not familiar with our Rhododendrons would come away concluding that Dorset and Cornwall have different taxa there, whereas in fact both counties contain an inseparable mixture of hybridised and non-hybridised *Rhododendron ponticum* plants. Neither worker can be faulted, because these are not consistently distinguishable, and so each worker had to make an arbitrary choice to call them one thing or the other. Of course, it's not just Dorset and Cornwall. The BSBI database map for '*R. × superponticum*' (Figure 1) misleadingly shows the plant as present only in strangely discrete patches around Britain, for example in West Wales the map shows it as abundant south of the river Dovey but absent to the north, which would come as a considerable surprise to the conservationists in Snowdonia who have spent decades keeping the plant in check there. Western Scotland has no records either. The patches on the map reflect the locations of recorders who have decided to use the name '*superponticum*', and have no biological meaning.

As we'll see below, *some* individuals can be confidently assigned to '*R. × superponticum*' (though only if one stretches the rules of taxonomy to near breaking point), while for other specimens it is simply impossible. It is a name mired in chaos.

Let me summarise the background to this. *Rhododendron ponticum* belongs to the subgenus *Hymenanthes*, within which every one of the >200 species seems to be highly interfertile with every other. As a result of both deliberate and accidental hybridisation in cultivation, mostly during the 19th century, some British material of *R. ponticum* acquired



Other regular sections include a round-up of plant records from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland; BSBI and member's notices and book reviews edited by Clive Stace.

COUNTRY ROUNDUPS

Compiled by Pete Stroh
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three – a little good news in such a troubling year. Keeping our feet wet and the plants dynamic, *Lythrum*

northumberland. Whilst recording a water meadow at Shalford in Surrey, Bill Stanworth, David Streeter and Ann Sankey found

ENGLAND

Aside from the discovery of *Lomaxia* (Lomaxia) in the wild (orchid) in the wild (article, p.7), perhaps the biggest botanical discovery this summer was in stature *Helios* (Creeping Mars) population of the species. Webste to the L. West Su was late by Fred and Ma their dis issue (p. Rathe

NOTICES

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

An updated List of Members will be available soon on the members only section of the BSBI website (bsbi.org/members [password protected]), correct to the end of 2020. If any member without

NEW YEAR PLANT HUNT

By the time you read this, our tenth New Year Plant Hunt will be over and we'll be hard at work analysing the results, a summary of which will appear in the April issue of *BSBI News*. The full analysis and the press release will be available here: www.bsbi.org.

REVIEWS



Britain's Ferns. A Field-guide to the Clubmosses, Quillworts, Horesetails and Ferns of Britain and Ireland
James Merryweather
Princeton University Press, Woodstock, 2020; pp.280, with many coloured photographs and maps; sbk, £20.00.
ISBN 9780691180397

Fern books are a rare commodity, but are a field for which Britain is known, and in which it has at least two centuries of sound and respectable history. This new and exciting book is therefore a successive milestone. James Merryweather has gone to a lot of steady, careful and experienced effort to illustrate the material well, from colour photos of whole plants in situ to close-ups of sori and frond structure.

The lead-in text of the book deals excellently with the definition of pteridophytes. It then continues with comparisons of the four main groups (clubmosses, quillworts, horesetails and ferns) and the key features in their overall recognition. This is then followed by species accounts. The book is rounded-off with discussions of field seasonal aspects, urban habitats, variations

seen in ferns, and some non-native species (to cover all of these would probably need another book).

The species accounts, which form the main body of the book, are excellent throughout. The text for each, however, is surprisingly brief, giving only general identification overviews for each species. Features of each that are especially useful in identification are emphasised, and tips to note for each species are further helpful in determining particular identities. All the text also stresses key features which are of easily visible size, and which therefore make this book genuinely field-usable. High quality in situ colour habitat photographs are presented for each species. Each also has a single frond-silhouette, which can be of enormous further help in drawing comparisons between species and in confirming identifications. These are important, since such details as frond dissection and marginal serrations are so much more clearly conveyed in photographs than in words. The frond details are usually set against black backgrounds, an excellent choice as it shows details of frond and especially pinna and pinnule margins very clearly. Each species is also accompanied by a general thumbnail range-map of its general presence across Britain and Ireland. This all makes this book very much an identification manual, which is probably its intended remit. The main omission seems to be that most hybrids are not included. This is my only disappointment, since recognition of hybrids in our pteridophyte flora is something in which Britain and Ireland lead the world.

Lastly, this attractive book, which is highly recommended, has a further important role to play. The flora of Britain and Ireland is probably the best-documented of any flora. We know a lot of detail, but there is always more to be uncovered. It is thus immensely important that we have good, readable and accessible publications available that summarise knowledge so far, set baselines, and, especially importantly, help thereby to raise general interest in an otherwise specialist topic. This always helps stimulate onward awareness and perhaps further study for the future.

Chris Page



A Flora of Cornwall
Colin French
Wheat Seaton Press, Camborne, 2020; pp. iv + 548, copious illustrations and maps; hbk, £50.00.
ISBN 9780953461332

The last twenty years has seen an emerging tradition of regional Floras as large, glamorous books for the table top; this one follows and develops that trend. Given just 21 years since the last Cornish Flora appeared, some potential readers may wonder whether it is

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- A membership welcome pack which includes three most recent issues of *BSBI News*, print copies of the BSBI Yearbook, BSBI Code of Conduct, our booklet 'So You Want to Know Your Plants' and a BSBI bookmark.
- Your password for the members-only area of the BSBI website where you can access scientific papers published in *New Journal of Botany*, view electronic back issues of *BSBI News* 2015–2021... and much, much more.