



# English Botanical News

No.4

2023 June



*Anemone nemorosa* (**Wood Anemone**), Rough Hill Wood, Malvern  
(Jane Tavener)

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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 interesting vice-county records.
- 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, particularly those resident in England. A printable booklet version of the pdf is available on request.

## News from the President: Micheline Sheehy Skeffington

Well, this has been an eventful and busy year already! It was a privilege for me to be involved in the Cambridge launch, albeit online. I was only sorry I couldn't be at either that or the Newcastle one in person. In Ireland, as in Britain, Plant Atlas 2020 has had great publicity and, as a



Micheline hunting for filmy ferns at the ASM

result, I'm still being asked to give talks about the declining native Irish flora and threats to biodiversity. It really has put BSBI on the Irish map - literally.

And then we hosted the ASM. Jonathan pointed out that, as there's now an Irish President, it ought to be held in Ireland. So we chose Killarney as a venue, as it has a superb National Park, with its lakes, islands, woodlands and bogs rich in flora. I'm told 90 signed up for it most of them Irish, young and keen to learn, which is great. A few enquired and booked as a result of hearing us on the radio for the Plant Atlas launch! It was certainly a very eventful and enjoyable four days. And we had perfect weather; it wasn't even too sunny or hot!

We are currently lucky in Ireland in that Minister of State for Heritage, Malcolm Noonan takes a keen interest in wildlife and has injected long-overdue funds into the National Parks & Wildlife Service. As a result, they could sponsor the ASM, which kept costs down and made for some very eventful and enjoyable boat trips *inter alia*.

However, Plant Atlas 2020 is only the start. We all need to find ways to make use of the data for effective

conservation measures. The construction of heat maps is one way, but each VCR should be able to use the finer-scale mapping (at least at monad level) to locate key areas for plant diversity -and then to monitor them, preferably along with a relevant authority to ensure their conservation. This is complex work. But it's essential to take the results further. And we should take every opportunity to highlight the professional (with a small 'p') work that BSBI does in recording all our vascular flora and establish links with the public. We can't sit back on our laurels (or might it be bog myrtle?!).

I look forward to meeting more of you in person and I will be at the Recorders' Conference in Preston Mountford this autumn. See you there!

[Micheline Sheehy Skeffington](#)

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## **News from the Chair: Jonathan Shanklin**

Botany in 2022 was more or less back to normal, so there was a lot to keep me busy with the various hats that I wear. As Chair of CfE I organised committee meetings, recorders' meetings and planned for the Atlas 2020 launch. As Hon.



Ashes Valley in Shropshire

Field Meetings Secretary I organised an Annual Summer Meeting at Malham Tarn and there was the Yearbook to compile, which included the B&IB abstracts. It is great to know that the colour version that I prepare is now available from the Members' area

on the BSBI web pages. As VCR I've done a lot of recording, in my own county and also in Shropshire, Denbighshire and Flintshire.

Over the last few months I've also been helping to organise the 2023 Annual Summer Meeting, which was held in Killarney. This was a bigger event than most of the recent ASMs with 90 people registering and 80 actually taking part. It provided me with an interesting contrast with the species that I'm used to in Cambridgeshire and



*Pinguicula grandiflora* (**Large-flowered Butterwort**) – a plant I recorded in 1963 and recorded again at the ASM this year.

there was much opportunity for learning and socialising. In 2024 the ASM is planned for Guernsey so do put May 20-24 in your diary if you want to see a further selection of unusual plants and meet up with other botanists.

In my role of VCR for Cambridgeshire (v.c.29) I've continued with many of the activities mentioned in the last issue which included:

- Updating the RPCC, which unlike many RPRs is just a simple list of the qualifying species, along with the dates of their first and last record and the reason for inclusion. This makes it relatively straightforward to make an annual update. With the recent increase in records of *Himantoglossum hircinum* (**Lizard Orchid**) this species is no longer threatened in the county, and with two new sites already this year it is no longer even scarce in the county. It does however remain Nationally Scarce, so could be retained on the listing when I come to review it next January.



- Sitting on the County Wildlife Sites panel, making suggestions for new sites, improving guidelines for site selection and making some site visits. A recent addition to the guidelines is for Important Arable Plant Areas and I visited one potential site with Lucy Wilson (BCN Wildlife Trust sites officer). We found *Anthemis cotula* (**Stinking Chamomile**), *Chaenorhinum minus* (**Small Toadflax**), *Filago germanica* (**Common Cudweed**), *Geranium pusillum* (**Small-flowered Crane's-bill**), *Lamium amplexicaule* (**Henbit Dead-nettle**), *Legousia hybrida* (**Venus's-looking-glass**), *Papaver dubium* (**Long-headed Poppy**), *Roemeria argemone* (**Prickly Poppy**), *Roemeria hybrida* (**Rough Poppy**), *Veronica polita* (**Grey Field-speedwell**) and *Viola tricolor* (**Wild Pansy**) allowing the site to qualify on just one visit.
- Doing rather a lot of recording (the DDb says 30,392 records in 2022, but this excludes some 23,000 records made in Flintshire and Shropshire)
- Providing botanical records on request. Some objectors to planning applications would like the botany near a site to be a reason for rejecting an application. In some cases however, the botany isn't significant and the development would have little or no effect on it.
- Giving advice and making reports to site managers. I made thorough surveys of several Cambridge



*Scandix pecten-veneris*  
**(Shepherd's-needle)** with  
*Ranunculus marginatus* (**St  
 Martin's Buttercup**) in an  
 arable weed bed in my garden

college grounds during 2022 and wrote short reports for the Head Gardener and college committees.

- Carrying out practical conservation work as part of the local Wildlife Trust volunteer team. This often includes work at nice sites and I usually record their botany whilst at it. A recent visit found *Salvia verbenaca* (**Wild Clary**) on the Fleam Dyke SSSI, which has not been seen there before. I suspect a deliberate introduction by some unknown person.

Thanks are due to all those who have contributed to this newsletter. I would particularly like to acknowledge the VCRs, who make such a big contribution to the work of the



*Narcissus pseudonarcissus* subsp. *pseudonarcissus* (**Daffodil**) in St John's College Wilderness, where it has been growing since at least 1820.

BSBI. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new England VCRs: Bob Kirby for North Devon (v.c.4), Tristan Norton for South Hampshire (v.c.11), Nevil Hutchinson for West Sussex (v.c.13), Rupert Higgins and Olga Krylova for West Gloucestershire (v.c.34) and Anne Haden for Sark (v.c.113s). There are also the many

photographers, whose images of plants in England, submitted to the BSBI photographic competition, are scattered throughout the newsletter, often near a mention of the relevant county.

Do let us have feedback on EBN as this will help improve content. It might also provide interest to have a letters page, so do send in controversial viewpoints for publication.

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## News from the England Field Meetings

### Secretary: Mary Dean

Field meeting leaders always hope the weather will be pleasant for their meeting, so spare a thought for Mark Duffell whose outdoor Conifer id workshop in Shropshire was planned for 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023. If you had booked for that meeting you'll remember what happened just a few days before, the only major snowfall of the winter in some parts of England, including Shropshire. It was



A typical local group meeting

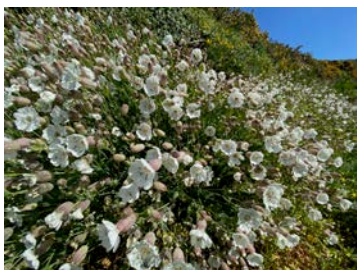
not possible to hold the meeting so Mark had to cancel at short notice. Mark hopes to rearrange this meeting for later in the year for those who had booked. There may be spare places to keep checking on the [Events webpage](#) to book for this or any other field and indoor meetings. There is plenty on offer in all four countries.

The field meetings season is now, at the end of May, well under way. In England, five national meetings have run successfully: a *Taraxacum* weekend, three general / recording meetings welcoming botanists of all standards and one meeting aimed at beginners and new members. I thank the organisers and leaders of these meetings and of those run in 2022 or planned for 2023.

Looking to the programme there are another ten national meetings in England, so plenty to attract members. For something closer to home remember to view the local meetings webpage: [Local Botany – Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland](#). In June there is a specialised Sedges day in Cumbria, a joint meeting with the [London Natural History Society](#) (LNHS) to Ramme Marsh in Middlesex, and two



meetings to visit nature reserves. The first is a new venture, a joint meeting with the [Royal Entomological Society](#) to their Daneway Banks reserve in Gloucestershire, the second to the Plantlife's [Deep Dale Nature Reserve](#) in Derbyshire. At the end of June a specialised *Rubus* weekend visits Hertfordshire and Middlesex and there is another *Rubus* weekend (Darlington area) in July. July to end of season meetings include a visit to a disused colliery site (Rufford Colliery, Nottinghamshire), Monken Hadley Common and Syon Park (both Middlesex and joint with LNHS), and last, but not least, Wallasea Island in Essex managed by [The RSPB](#).



*Silene uniflora*  
(**Sea Campion**), Jersey C.I.  
(Alli Singleton)

I've already received a couple of offers for meetings in 2024, which is great. We need more to make a good programme around the country. There are different ways of organising / leading a meeting and / or sharing the work. For example, joint meetings with other societies, a visit to a nature reserve with a talk by the manager, inviting

members to join in a local meeting. The site doesn't need to have lots of rarities, members enjoy meeting up, learning from each other and you never know what you will find. If you would like to organise and/or lead a meeting or workshop in 2024, please get in touch.

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## News from the England Officer: Pete Stroh

As you might be aware, the BSBI published a plant atlas in March of this year. I'd like to begin my short note by again thanking you all for your wonderful work in helping to produce such a comprehensive representation of the

current state of our flora. I hope that you are deservedly proud when perusing both the online atlas and the (rather heavy) book. It is, of course, not all happy reading, but I'm sure that during fieldwork many of you will have found new species for your locality, as well as promising meadows, marshes, pastures, arable margins or other wild corners that were previously overlooked. I'm just as certain that there are still flower-rich places that remain undiscovered, and species not recorded for many years that still persist in hard-to-access locations. No doubt some of you are continuing to 'square bash', either because it has become an enjoyable habit, or perhaps because your county is working its way towards a new Flora. You might be helping to produce a new or updated Rare Plant Register, such a useful tool for ecologists and local authorities. Or you might simply be treating yourself by visiting and enjoying known species-rich sites that have been neglected for a while whilst you scoured the last few monads of unpromising countryside in the final few years of the atlas project. Whatever you are up to this spring and summer, I hope you manage to find sunny days and discover a wealth of exciting species.

Following the completion of the atlas, the Science Team is just about to start work on a new GB vascular plant Red List, thanks to funding from Natural England. This will be one of the first tangible outputs using the latest atlas dataset, and will, when published, be used to help inform



*Ophrys sphegodes*  
(**Early Spider-orchid**),  
Dorset (Ryan Grover)

conservationists, researchers, policy makers and others about our most threatened plants. But not just inform, I hope. In many cases, we already know that urgent action is required to reverse declines. Wouldn't it be nice to have a Red List with fewer threatened species! The Red List is likely to take up a considerable amount of my time for the next 18 months or so, but over the course of the spring and summer I am hoping to find opportunities to visit as many areas of England as possible, mainly to catch up with local recorders after the prolonged incarceration at my desk. I'll



*Viola canina* subsp. *canina*  
**(Heath Dog-violet)** at  
Woodwalton Fen NNR,  
Huntingdonshire (8<sup>th</sup> May  
2023)

also soon be contacting a number of County Recorders and members to ask if they have recent counts for species currently qualifying as threatened due to very small or restricted populations (I'll spare you the IUCN Criteria and sub criteria blurb). Over the coming year I'll also be contributing to the completion of the Science Strategy (more fun than it might sound), recording my NPMS square, testing the new BSBI recording app (in progress, and sure to be well worth the wait), scrutinising Violets at Woodwalton and Holme Fens in Huntingdonshire, and trying my best to help with any requests from you that I receive.

It seems like spring is flying by, and everything is starting to flower all at once after a very slow start. For those of you who I don't meet in the field, or converse with via email/phone, I hope to see you in October at the Recorders' Meeting in Shrewsbury, or maybe at the British & Irish Botanical Conference (previously known as the Annual Exhibition Meeting) in November. In the meantime, happy botanising!

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## New BSBI staff: James Harding-Morris (Countries Support Manager)

It's been a pleasure to join you all as BSBI's first Countries Support Manager, though the role is certainly heavily indebted to the fantastic work of Jim McIntosh. I hope that I can continue to support VCRs across Britain and Ireland in the way that he did and build on the foundations that he laid.



James admiring *Sorbus porrigentifformis* (**Grey-leaved Whitebeam**)



*Ophrys insectifera*  
(**Fly Orchid**), Surrey  
(Gillian Elsom)

But first, a bit about me. I grew up in East Yorkshire and my main childhood interest was butterflies. v.c.61 is not the most butterfly-rich place, but I have fond memories of finding populations of Marbled Whites and Wall scattered across the chalk of the Wolds. With butterflies came the first stirrings of botany; the need to identify foodplants and nectar sources.

I went to university in North Yorkshire, v.c.62, and it was here, as I explored the limestone on the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors for Duke of Burgundy and Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, that I discovered orchids. The landscape here had *Ophrys insectifera*, (**Fly Orchid**), *Neottia nidus-avis* (**Bird's-nest Orchid**), *Neotinea ustulata* (**Burnt Orchid**) and even a tiny

outlying population of *Pseudorchis albida* (**Small-white Orchid**). As I learnt my orchids other species caught my eye – early non-orchid species that caught my attention included *Paris quadrifolia* (**Herb Paris**), *Cornus suecica* (**Dwarf Cornel**) and *Pyrola minor* (**Common Wintergreen**).

I moved to Bedfordshire in 2013 to take up a role with



James studying *Ranunculus cantabrigiensis* (**Backs Goldilocks Buttercup**)

the RSPB where I worked on the management of public participation projects – Big Schools' Birdwatch, the Big Wild Sleepout, Vote for Bob and Big Garden Birdwatch, as well as internal projects around GDPR and Opt-in. In 2017 I became the Communications and Engagement Manager for

Back from the Brink. This was a cross-organisation, lottery-funded project aimed at preventing the extinction of a range of species in England. Some key species we worked on were *Scleranthus perennis* ssp. *prostratus* (**Prostrate Perennial Knawel**) and *Artemisia campestris* (**Field Wormwood**) in the Brecks, arable plants across the country including *Bromus interruptus* (**Interrupted Brome**) and *Ranunculus arvensis* (**Corn Buttercup**) (though I never managed to catch up with *Adonis annua* (**Pheasant's-eye**!)) as well as the reintroduction of the Chequered Skipper to Rockingham Forest in Northamptonshire. It also had a focus on engaging new audiences and bringing a new demographic to conservation.

Over these years botany became my primary natural history interest where it has remained ever since. I have a particular fondness for long-established well-behaved aliens; the sort of species that don't really spread but maintain themselves in the same place for decades. I don't know what it is about them I enjoy so much but seeing



*Asarum europaeum* (**Asarabacca**) near Redlynch in Wiltshire where it's been known for around 200 years just delighted me.



James with *Minuartia stricta* (**Teesdale Sandwort**)

After the Back from the Brink programme ended in 2021 I took on managing the RSPB's Membership Recruitment & Retention programme, a collection of projects aimed at increasing the RSPB's membership number through collaboration with members and prospective members; aiming to identify what a membership needed to be in order to foster wider and deeper engagement.

I also moved back to Lincolnshire where I took on the vacant VCR post for North Lincolnshire, v.c.54. This didn't have a lot in place compared to other counties – no local group, RPR, checklist etc., - and my intention is to work with VCRs to produce guidance on the best approach to developing these aspects which I can then sense-check myself for my own VC.

This brings us neatly up to the present. In my role I manage our Country Officers Paul Green and Matt Harding as well as our Training Coordinator Chantal Helm. I am also immersing myself in the needs of VCRs as revealed by the recent BSBI Forum, Annual Reports, and Jonathan's survey of English VCRs. There are some clear common themes and the Country Support Team and I are planning how best to tackle them. I really hope that our team can make a difference for VCRs, and I am always happy to hear your thoughts and ideas about what we can be doing more-of or differently.

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## New BSBI staff: Chantal Helm (Training Coordinator)

Chantal Helm completed her formal education in South Africa where she undertook her undergraduate study at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), studying Geology and Animal, Plant and Environmental Sciences. Her Honours dissertation involved a series of trips to the Barberton Mountain



Chantal Helm

Lands, home of some of the oldest rocks on earth, studying the floristics of the serpentine soils common in those ancient landscapes. Many happy hours were spent in the Moss Herbarium at Wits identifying and studying plant species adapted to ultramafic soils. Chantal then undertook a Masters at the University of Pretoria, investigating the ecological separation of two wildebeest species in terms of botanical diet composition and habitat preferences. Chantal has fond memories of identifying grasses ingested by wildebeest using microhistological faecal analysis. Chantal then returned to Wits to obtain her PhD which investigated the autecology of a keystone tree species in the African savanna, *Sclerocarya birrea* subsp. *caffra* also known as Marula. This included extensive periods working in the Kruger National Park with its fantastic diversity of wildlife and recording the impacts of the world's largest land mammal on tree species. It also required establishing a nursery of Marula plants in a glasshouse, to study the impacts of fire and herbivory on survival.

Upon arriving in the UK in 2011, Chantal took up a teaching fellow position at the University of Bath teaching on plant diversity, statistics and ecology modules. This was

followed by a lecturing post at the University of Hertfordshire (UH), teaching ecology and plant identification skills and co-ordinating activities at the UH Bayfordbury field station, including hosting placement students, writing management plans, undertaking conservation management, establishing an apiary and engaging local community groups and schools with wildlife activities.

In 2018, Chantal took up a post at Cambridge



BSBI members in the CUBG at a field meeting in 2012.

University Botanic Garden (CUBG) as their Higher Education and Research Impact Co-ordinator. While at CUBG, she led on expanding the interpretation in the Garden, writing adult trails, developing and delivering a learning programme for post-16 students, engaging University students with

projects in the Garden and organising the annual Bioblitz. As a member of the University's Ecological Advisory Panel, she developed training materials for wildlife friendly gardening and encouraged an increase in wildlife monitoring in the Garden and across the Cambridge University Estate using iRecord, as well as contributing to the publication of the University's Biodiversity Action plan.

Chantal is also a licenced bat worker and a nature enthusiast who co-ordinates wildlife training and surveying activities and leads educational walks for a number of volunteer organisations across Hertfordshire, including the Herts and Middlesex Bat Group and the Hertfordshire Natural History Society. She also co-ordinates the [Hertfordshire Mammal, amphibian and reptile Atlas project](#), due for publication in 2026, as well as the [Hertfordshire Barbastelle Project](#), and verifies mammal records submitted to iRecord in Hertfordshire. Chantal is also a keen hiker and

horse rider and has recently started a new sport which involves orienteering on horseback.

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## The Committee for England 2023 – 2024

The following members were elected to the Committee at the AGM. The posts of Secretary and Newsletter Editor are currently vacant.

[Jonathan Shanklin](#) (Chair, Hon. Field Meetings Secretary and VCR for Cambridgeshire)

[Mary Dean](#) (Trustee, England Field Meetings Secretary)

Astrid Biddle (co-VCR for Hertfordshire)

Mark Duffell (Botanical consultant and tutor)

Anne Haden (VCR for Jersey)

Chris Metherell (VCR for North Northumberland)

David Morris (VCR for Oxfordshire)

Jo Parmenter (Secretary of S&D)

Fred Rumsey (Referee)

Thomas Ward

Lizzie Cooke (Plantlife Representative)



*Lathraea squamaria*  
(**Toothwort**), The Sheepleas  
in Surrey Hills (Chris Heath)

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 they can take place by Zoom. When we resume in person meetings we will endeavour to hold one at a convenient location, perhaps in association with another event.

The Committee minutes are on the password protected BSBI Governance pages, which are accessible to all BSBI Members. The next CfE meeting will be held on October 16 by Zoom, and if you have any suggestions for the Committee to consider do get in touch with the Chair.

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## Annual Report for 2022 from the Chair of the Committee for England: Jonathan Shanklin



*Ophrys sphegodes*  
(**Early Spider-orchid**), Dorset  
(Ryan Grover)

The third England Annual Meeting was held via Zoom in 2022 February and attracted a good attendance. With the relaxation of Covid regulations it was possible to meet in person and Mary Dean ensured that a wide range of field meetings was held across the country. At fairly short notice I arranged a Summer Meeting at the FSC Malham Tarn centre. Also at short notice I arranged a Recorders' Meeting in 2022 October, which was well attended by recorders from England, with representatives from the other

three countries also taking part.

A further set of meetings for England recorders was held via Zoom in 2023 January; these are a good way of engaging with VCRs and recorders who are no longer able to get out and about. The third edition of the Newsletter *English Botanical News* was published in May. It included a report of the Annual Meeting and the Zoom meetings held with England recorders. Contributions for the next newsletter would be welcome as would an editor.



The CfE met in October and in January, again by Zoom. An updated poster describing the Committee was produced for the AEM (now called the BIBConf) and can be seen on the AEM web page.

Planning for the launch of the Plant Atlas 2020 in England has taken up plenty of time and I'm looking forward to the event. This will be in the form of events at Cambridge and Newcastle, with the Cambridge conference proceedings available online. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that it all runs smoothly.



*Persicaria bistorta*  
**(Common Bistort)**,  
Wiltshire (Quirky Junket)

Looking forward we hope that members will be encouraged to continue participating in the England Project and will get out in the field and hunt for "lost" plants in much the same way that they hunt for flowering plants on New Year's Day. We plan to hold another meeting at Preston Montford in spring 2024 that will

be more targeted at members who aspire to take the next steps in becoming recorders.

Jonathan Shanklin

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## **Annual Report for 2022 from the England Officer: Pete Stroh**

Virtually all my time in 2022 and early 2023 was devoted to Plant Atlas 2020, although I attempted to maintain contact with England VCRs during this period, and answer requests when sent. For the remainder of 2023, and early 2024, I will be working on a revised GB Red List, which has external

funding from Natural England. It is hoped that an England Red List will follow when that is completed, funding permitting.

Pete Stroh

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## Annual Report for 2022 from the England Field Meetings Secretary: Mary Dean

I'm delighted to report another successful season of BSBI England Field Meetings in 2022. I thank all meeting organisers and leaders for putting on these meetings, and thank landowners and managers for inviting us onto their reserves. Field meetings are an enjoyable way of seeing lovely areas of the country and interesting plants, meeting fellow enthusiasts, sharing knowledge, learning something new and making new friends.

I also thank organisers and leaders of local groups who have put on meetings for local botanists. Local meetings are important for encouraging local networks and recording, and for providing meetings for those who cannot or do not wish to travel longer distances.



*Dipsacus pilosus*  
(Small Teasel), Essex  
(Tristan Norton)

Ten national meetings were run during 2022. There were two specialised meetings for sedges and *Rubus* (**Brambles**); and eight general meetings, all of which welcomed beginners. The spring and summer of 2022 were hot and

dry in England and the flora suffered as a consequence. Most of the leaders reported that some target species had gone over by the date of the meeting.

The first meeting of the season on 14 May, led by Mark Spencer, was blessed with glorious weather. It was the first of two joint meetings with London Natural History Society (LNHS) as part of the 'London Flora Project'. Limehouse Basin and Limehouse Cut, Middlesex, were visited and Mark was able to show the beginners and others the lovely *Saxifraga tridactylites* (**Rue-leaved Saxifrage**), a plant that has increased in abundance in the London area. The very rare non-native grass *Ehrharta erecta* (**Panic Veldtgrass**) was also found.



*Saxifraga tridactylites* (**Rue-leaved Saxifrage**), Wisbech  
(Peter Leonard)

On 11 June Mike Porter ran his ever-popular sedges meeting, this year a repeat of the 2021 meeting in Cumberland. The more significant sedges examined included *Carex magellanica* (**Tall Bog-sedge**) and *C. lasiocarpa* (**Slender Sedge**) at Tarn Moss and *C. limosa* (**Bog-sedge**) and *C. pauciflora* (**Few-flowered Sedge**) at Eycott Hill. The same weekend Helena Crouch ran a two-day meeting in the Mendip Hills, North Somerset. Highlights of day one at Crook Peak included Somerset Rare Plant Register (RPR) species such as *Clinopodium acinos* (**Basil Thyme**), *Euphrasia tetraquetra* (**Western Eyebright**) and *Filago germanica* (**Common Cudweed**). Day two visited Crook Peak and finds included *Trifolium suffocatum* (**Suffocated Clover**), *Orobanche hederæ* (**Ivy Broomrape**) and the introduced *Dianthus gratianopolitanus* (**Cheddar Pink**).

The following weekend, on 18 June, Mark Spencer led his second joint meeting with LNHS, to continue recording from the large Staines Moor SSSI, Middlesex. An

unexpected find was *Geranium pratense* (**Meadow Crane's-bill**), uncommon as a native plant in Middlesex. They also found *Verbascum densiflorum* (**Dense-flowered Mullein**), which had not been seen in the county since 1968. Two of the rarities encountered in the afternoon were *Isolepis setacea* (**Bristle Club-rush**) and *Oenanthe fluviatile* (**River Water-dropwort**). On 26 June, at Heartwood Forest, Hertfordshire, was a joint meeting with the local flora group and led by Ian Denholm, Alla Mashanova and Astrid Biddle.

On 3 July a visit to Plantlife's Ranscombe Farm



*Oenanthe fluviatile*  
(**River Water-dropwort**) in the  
River Cam at Hinxton  
(Jonathan Shanklin)

Reserve, led by reserve manager Richard Moyse and Sue Buckingham, attracted twenty-seven participants to see some of the specialities. Two plant species, *Salvia pratensis* (**Meadow Clary**) and *Malva setigera* (**Rough Mallow**), both had their first British records from here and both were found in flower, *S. pratensis* on the very edge

of a wood where it has been known for many decades. An unusual-looking broomrape, was finally determined as an atypical specimen of *Orobanche crenata* (**Bean Broomrape**), an introduced pest of bean fields which was first found just a few miles from Ranscombe Farm, but has never previously been recorded on the site itself.

Next in July was the *Rubus* Study Week (11 - 17 July), led by Rob Randall and covering areas of Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. During the week 69 of the 100 target species were studied. The following weekend, 23 July, Keith Robson led a meeting to Durham Wildlife Trust Herrington Hill reserve, an area with magnesium limestone

grassland. Typical plants of this habitat were seen including *Plantago media* (**Hoary Plantain**), *Pimpinella saxifraga* (**Burnet-saxifrage**) and *Scabiosa columbaria* (**Small Scabious**). In the afternoon the meeting visited Hastings Hill SSSI to see *Epipactis atrorubens* (**Dark-red Helleborine**) which was rediscovered there a few years ago.

Jonathan Shanklin and Sophie Lang (Marches Mosses BogLIFE project) led a meeting to Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses, Shropshire, on a very hot day, 12 August. Two of the target species, *Andromeda polifolia* (**Bog Rosemary**) and *Rhynchospora alba* (**White-beaked Sedge**) were soon spotted, along with quantities of *Vaccinium oxycoccos* (**Cranberry**).



*Vaccinium oxycoccos*  
(**Cranberry**) at Whixall  
Moss (Luke Roberts)

Brian Laney led the last meeting of the season, Daventry Country Park, Northamptonshire, on 17 September. The low water level

at the reservoir proved ideal for drawdown species such as *Rumex maritimus* (**Golden Dock**), *Bidens tripartita* (**Trifid Bur-marigold**) and *Limosella aquatica* (**Mudwort**). On a nearby disused railway line, at one particular railway bridge, the botanists saw a population of *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (**Maidenhair Fern**). The population has increased in recent years, helped by Brian's work to remove encroaching Ivy from threatening the fern.

There are currently sixteen in the programme for 2023, with details in the Yearbook and on the website. I'm also pleased to report that a couple of vcrs have expressed interest in holding a meeting in 2024. It's not too early to be




thinking about holding a 2024 meeting and members and VCRs are invited to get in touch if this interests you.

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## England Annual Meeting 2023 February 26

### Draft Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> AGM

1. The Chair, Jonathan Shanklin, welcomed the 45 participants to the fourth England AGM, although this was only the third that was quorate. He noted that there were some places available at Mark Duffell's field meeting on Conifers at Nesscliffe, Shropshire on March 11. He also mentioned items 10 and 11 on the agenda. As there was no secretary he took some notes, although the meeting essentially ran as per the agenda.

*Euphorbia paralias* (**Sea Spurge**), Norfolk (Julia Masson)
2. The meeting remembered a sadly large number of deceased members who were resident in England: Donald Pigott, Clive Lovatt, Liz McDonnell, Eric Greenwood, Ian Hopkins, David Amatt, Laurie Boorman, Michael Foley, Peter Lambley, Alison Lean, John Oxenford, John Presland, J E Aslett, Barry Goater, Geoffrey Joyce, Pauline Popely, Richard Robinson, Terry Swainbank, Christopher Walker, D Albon, G D Field, Sheila Gilmour, Peter Heathcote, J D Hopton, Joan Mossop, Stephen

Povey, Rose Murphy, Elizabeth Elliot and Gren Lucas with a short period of silent reflection.

3. Apologies were received from Martin Godfrey, Pete Stroh and Steve Gater.
4. Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting were accepted as correct.
5. There were no matters arising, though the Chair apologised for omitting to mention at the previous AGM that Martin Godfrey had stood down from the CfE.
6. The majority of existing members of CfE were first formally elected for a three year term at the AGM in 2021 as the first AGM was not quorate. Chair: Jonathan Shanklin; Committee Members: Mary Dean, Mark Duffell, Anne Haden, Chris Metherell, David Morris, Jo Parmenter, Fred Rumsey, Thomas Ward (2022). Astrid Biddle had been co-opted to the CfE since the last AGM. She was formally nominated for election and was duly elected by a show of virtual hands. Ian Denholm and John Swindells wished to stand down from the CfE and were thanked for their contributions and support of the Chair.
7. The England Officer's Report from Pete Stroh is on page 19.
8. The Chair's Report from Jonathan Shanklin is on page 18 and the Chair briefly took the meeting through it. There were no questions.
9. The Field Meeting Secretary's report from Mary Dean is on page 20 and she took the meeting through the highlights. There were no questions.



*Calluna vulgaris* (**Heather**),  
Northumberland (Susan Cook)

10. The Chair noted that the launch of Plant Atlas 2020 would take place by Zoom on March 8. The England launch would follow on March 18, with an in person afternoon event in Cambridge at the British Antarctic Survey, which would also be available on Zoom and an event at the Great North Museum: Hancock in Newcastle.
11. Following the successful Recorders' Meeting held at Preston Montford in 2022 another would take place in 2023 and this would be open to all recorders.
12. There was no AoB.
13. In order to allow wide participation it was agreed that the next AGM should again take place by Zoom on 2024 February 25 at 2pm.
14. The AGM then closed at 14:25.

The meeting was then treated to three short talks: Helena Crouch on Somerset aliens, Mark Duffel on Invasive non-native species in Shropshire and Ian Trueman on The Flora of Sutton Park. These were followed by a short break, following which Katharina



*Eriophorum angustifolium*  
(**Common Cottongrass**),  
Alnwick (John Dalrymple)

Dehnen-Schmutz spoke on the Impact of alien plants in VCs See also <https://neobiota.pensoft.net/article/89448/> and Jonathan Shanklin concluded with an address on Churches, churchyards and cemeteries. All the talks can be seen on the [BSBI YouTube channel](#) with summaries given here. The meeting closed at 17:00 with thanks to all the speakers and to Julia Hanmer for hosting the BSBI Zoom.

Jonathan Shanklin  
Acting Secretary

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## England Annual Meeting 2023 talks

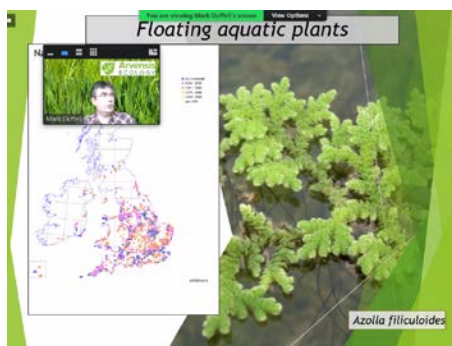
Our first talk was from Helena Crouch on Somerset aliens. There was a long history of interest in aliens in the county, dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Around 3000 taxa were recorded



from Somerset, of which about 1800 are aliens. There are some iconic species: *Paeonia mascula* (**Peony**) was recorded from Steep Holm in 1803, naturalised on cliffs, but has dwindled to a single plant in a cage. Like the Peony, *Leucojum vernum* (**Spring Snowflake**) was recorded as a possible native in early issues of the Red Data Book. *Scutellaria altissima* (**Somerset Skullcap**) was found in 1929 and is probably a relict garden plant. Helena then described some interesting aliens that were new to Somerset and which might appear elsewhere. In Bath *Galium murale* (**Tiny bedstraw**) was found in 2010 on the Royal Crescent, only the third British record; it has since been found more widely, on paving, quaysides and car parks. *Urtica membranacea* (**Mediterranean Nettle**) was also found new to Somerset in 2010, but there have been no records beyond the original site. There are increasing numbers of bird-seed aliens. Examples included *Salvia hispanica* (**Chia**), also used a health food additive, which was found by Chew Valley Lake in 2017; the first record of this species was made in 2013 in Ely [by Alan Leslie]. *Datura ferox* (**Angel's-trumpets** or **Long-spined Thorn-apple**) would probably have been overlooked if it hadn't been in fruit. *Sagittaria latifolia* (**Duck-potato**) was occasionally planted and possibly overlooked for *Sagittaria sagittifolia* (**Arrowhead**) as the leaves can be similar, but

not the flowers. The newly reported *Wolffia* spp. (**Rootless Duckweeds**) have probably also been overlooked in the past: *Wolffia columbiana* (**Columbian Watermeal**) was found in Somerset by Richard Lansdown. In answer to a question Helena said that the routes of arrival of alien species change over time – people are the new sheep! Some plants won't survive a harsh winter but many do. [Since her talk, Helena has been told that the *Cochlearia acaulis* (**Violet Cress**) she reported as new to Somerset in Bath was in fact *Mentha requienii* (**Corsican Mint**), only once found previously in v.c.6].

Mark Duffell then asked the question “Does Shropshire have an INNS problem?”. This was a desk based study using records from the DDb. Some aliens are Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and 41 are

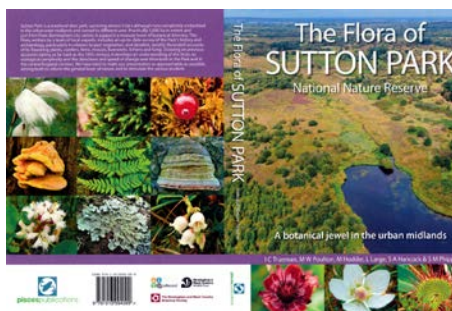


listed in Section 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act. In Shropshire INNS are present in nearly every hectad, but the distribution is much more patchy when zoomed to tetrad, and then monad level – scale matters. Although Shropshire is well botanised, some species, particularly conifers, may be overlooked. Mapping suggest that INNS are quite widespread, however only 4258 of the 571,000 records in the DDb are of INNS and only 27 of the 41 Schedule 9 species are present. A harsh winter will (and has) eradicated some. *Azolla filiculoides* (**Water Fern**) has a rather patchy distribution across England. It only has 66 records in Shropshire and is currently found at 28 sites. It has been found as an accidental introduction amongst pond



plants at garden centres and so has the potential to establish at new sites. *Elodea canadensis* (**Canadian Waterweed**) and *E. nuttallii* (**Nuttall's Waterweed**) are widespread, though the former is declining. *E. canadensis* is found in the larger rivers, whilst *E. nuttallii* was more a plant of canals and urban areas. *Crassula helmsii* (**New Zealand Pigmyweed**) is probably the worst offender, though at one site it only grew on the brick paving margin of a lake – any fragments being eaten by carp in the lake itself. The hotspots for aquatic INNS are Brown Moss, the Montgomery Canal and Shrewsbury. Other INNS are mostly in urban areas. A lot of them originate with horticulture. So yes, Shropshire does have an INNS problem, but for a number of them it is only the start of their invasion. In response to a question Mark said that it was likely that plants could move downstream from gardens. It was important to target populations for eradication before they spread – it is usually cheaper in the long run. If there is a Schedule 9 plant on your land you have a duty to control its spread onto other sites. *Reynoutia* [*Fallopia*] *x bohemica* (**Bohemian Knotweed** (*R. japonica x sachalinensis*)) was only on a couple of sites and has been eradicated from one of them, so it is not increasing (yet).

Our third short talk was from Ian Trueman who had just completed a book on the Flora of Sutton Park, which lies between Walsall and Sutton Coldfield. It had started life as a deer park and is very large covering 15 monads. It has varied habitats, including an old roman road, railway and fish-ponds, mostly in a pre-



agricultural landscape. Sutton Park is on the south-east tip of the distribution of quite a few species - the wet woodlands are quite interesting, with *Carex canescens* (**White Sedge**). The heathland is cattle grazed, but it is becoming harder to find graziers. It has little *Festuca ovina* (**Sheep's-fescue**) and is mostly *F. filiformis* (**Fine-leaved Sheep's-fescue**). The flushes which feed two streams have a very diverse flora including *Carex diandra* (**Lesser Tussock-Sedge**) and *Parnassia palustris* (**Grass-of-Parnassus**). Flora writing started in 2005, as part of the Flora of Birmingham and the Black Country which was published in 2014 and the most recent survey up to 2019.



Plants of dry heath at Sutton Park are isolated from their main distribution

Mapping species of a changing environment showed that they were becoming more common in the eastern part of the Park. The distribution of Nationally Rare & Scarce species showed much less change. *Impatiens glandulifera* (**Himalayan Balsam**) was hated – it is an attractive plant, but is spreading, particularly in the wet woods which are hazardous, making it difficult to eradicate. *Crassula helmsii* is fortunately only in one small pool, which also has *Acorus calamus* (**Sweet-flag**). This has now spread to three monads. *Rhododendron ponticum* (**Rhododendron**) is also increasing. Invasive natives are perhaps a bigger problem. *Glyceria maxima* (**Reed Sweet-grass**) has recently appeared. This may be because there are three Combined Sewage Overflows that feed into Park streams and there is also a lot of nitrogen enrichment from urban traffic. The Flora covers more than just the vascular plants – there are

also chapters on fungi, lichens, bryophytes and archaeology. As well as a target audience of botanists it is also written to engage non-botanists and encourage them to become interested. Asked about the future of the Park, Ian thought it could perhaps represent a bell-weather to show change.

After a short break Katharina Dehnen-Schmutz spoke on the Impact of alien plants in VCs. This was based on [a paper published in NeoBiota](#) that had been written with input from VCRs and co-authored by Kevin Walker, Oli Pescott and Olaf Booy. The number of non-native species

	Well documented in Britain	Well documented elsewhere, but not in Britain	Assumed impacts, not documented, assessment often relying on distribution	Emerging, no documented impacts
Examples				
Management approach	Control and eradication, Sales bans	Risk Assessments, Sales bans	?	Risk assessments (for species with documented impacts elsewhere)

in the wild was increasing, so it was important to know their impact. There were four basic groups: well-documented and present in Britain and subject to management control

or eradication; well-documented elsewhere; assumed to have an impact; emerging, eg from horizon scanning. The Environmental Impact Classification of Alien Taxa (EICAT) has five categories of impact. A CEH group had applied the technique in 2016 to 2000 species, reducing it to 122 plants likely to have an impact and came up with a top ten. The question was whether a different group of people would come up with the same list, so BSBI VCRs were asked in 2019. There were two basic questions: what was the local top ten and assigning a score to each of the original top ten; this also looked at habitats affected. 86 VCRs responded.

*Crassula helmsii* came out worst. *Crococsmia crocosmiiflora* (**Montbretia** (*C. aurea x pottsii*)) was quite frequent, but did not have great impact. *Rubus spectabilis* (**Salmonberry**) was a problem where it grows, but is not

widespread. *Ludwigia grandiflora* (**Water-primrose**) was not frequent but had high potential impact. Neighbouring counties didn't always give the same score. The most affected habitat was woodland. Around 20 native species had been overcome, eg by *Crassula helmsii*.

She concluded that local knowledge provides valuable additional perspective. Impacts could be picked up earlier if similar surveys were repeated as problems often appear locally before getting into the published literature. This could identify new species requiring risk assessments. EICAT was suitable for local use, but it doesn't include urban habitats, which is a deficiency. In response to a question she said that further feedback would be welcome, with perhaps a repeat survey in 2029. This might also look at socio-economic aspects, as for example with *Buddleja davidii* (**Butterfly-bush**).

The talks finished with the Chair giving an address on Churches, churchyards and cemeteries. In many ways this was a continuation of my previous address on "How I became a botanist". When we moved to Dodleston I



Castle Camps churchyard is managed for its flora

I was introduced to bell-ringing and eventually learnt change-ringing. Change ringing is built on non-repeating sequences, with each bell ringing once in each change. On six bells there are  $1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 = 720$  unique changes and it is possible to ring them all without repetition in a "method" taking about 20 minutes. Ringing has taken me to churches all over England and to places like Cape Town, the Falkland

Islands and South Georgia. The last island has many introduced species that are native in England, for example *Achillea millefolium* (**Yarrow**).

“Closed” churchyards and cemeteries (those no longer open for burials) are often managed by penurious councils and consequently are mown by “cut and drop” or not mown at all. Others have neatly manicured lawns, though these can still be of high diversity, but some are just amenity grasslands. An increasing number are being managed for biodiversity.

In a paper for the local publication *Nature in Cambridgeshire*, I



*Plantago media* (**Hoary Plantain**)

I analysed the distribution of churchyard flora. Some species are as frequent in churchyards as in the wider countryside, whilst others such as *Taxus baccata* (**Yew**) are much more frequent. When

axiophytes and plants on the county Register of Plants of Conservation Concern were considered, some were quite frequent in churchyards. Plants such as *Plantago media* (**Hoary Plantain**) and *Salvia verbenaca* (**Wild Clary**) have basal leaves that lie flat on the ground escaping the predations of the mower. Several churchyards with a high number of species in these groups were designated as wildlife sites, but others with equally high numbers were not, suggesting that there is scope for new designations.

As the theme for the EAM was aliens I extended the analysis to look at the top ten aliens. Some were ubiquitous species, but there were groups that favoured the mown churchyards (e.g. *Veronica filiformis* (**Slender Speedwell**)),



others that favoured churchyard walls (e.g. *Centranthus ruber* (**Red Valerian**)) and some that were preferentially planted (e.g. *Eranthis hyemalis* (**Winter Aconite**)). Churchyards also harboured invasive species such as *Hedera 'Hibernica'* (**Irish Ivy**).

Many other taxa can be found in churchyards:  
bryophytes,



A wave of *Hedera 'Hibernica'* (**Irish Ivy**) nearly over-running *Eranthis hyemalis* (**Winter Aconite**)

invertebrates, lichens, fungi etc, and churchyards were important places for biodiversity. On a national level the charity Caring for God's Acre encouraged best practice. On a local level Wildlife Trusts often had award schemes. Even with

the best intentions there were occasional mistakes such as tree planting in good meadows. Churchyards form an accessible place for the public to see wildlife and need to be cherished.

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**BSBI Recorders' Meeting, October 28-30, Preston  
Montford, Shropshire (v.c.40)  
Jonathan Shanklin**

*During the BSBI Wales AGM at Bangor, members suggested that they would welcome a get-together for recorders. Then at the Annual Summer Meeting at the Field Studies Council (FSC) Malham Tarn centre the site manager said that all the FSC centres offered broadly the same rate. It seemed an opportunity to see if a Recorders'*



*Meeting could once again be held at Preston Montford and it turned out that there was a possible date at the end of October. It needed quick organisation, so once the BSBI agreed to the concept, I took on the organisation, as a committee would only delay things. This is a detailed report about what was then turned into a very successful and enjoyable event for the 50 participants. Talks were not recorded at the request of the presenters, however in many cases they were amenable to their presentation images being made available as a pdf, and these are on the [Recorders' Meeting web page](#).*

I arrived early to do some setting up and was greeted by the



Participants at the BSBI *Cotoneaster* meeting at East Pit, Cambridge

site manager Liz Wilcox and Mark Duffell a local BSBI member who often teaches at the centre. He proved to be an immensely useful ADC as he took care of all the local requirements needed to make the meeting a success. I had collected some

*Cotoneaster* specimens earlier in the week for what was to be an “ice-breaker” opening session and laid 20 specimens out on tables in two of the classrooms. Registration took place in the hour before the meeting formally started and recorders were soon chatting to each other. After a short welcome and introduction from the FSC and myself it was down to botany.

The *Cotoneasters* proved an interesting challenge. Participants worked in groups of about five around a table which had four or five specimens. I'd expected that people would spend a few minutes on each and might get round all

20 in an hour. Quite a few groups never got beyond their first table! I had provided a crib sheet which listed all the species known from East Pit in Cambridge where I had collected the majority of specimens, all of which had been determined by Alan Leslie and often refereed by Jeanette Fryer. Despite this, some groups identified other species, which shows how difficult *Cotoneasters* can be. After quite a bit more discussion, ids were agreed for the majority and written onto their tags and photographed by some participants for future reference.

I had planned the meeting so that there would be no parallel sessions, allowing presenters to hear all the talks, and with plenty of time for discussion during long tea and coffee breaks. So after a tea break, which included FSC cakes we moved on to hear about Alien Ferns from Fred Rumsey. There are over 38 species of non-native ferns in the country, with 2/3 spreading by spores. Most are in urban areas, partly due to sources from gardens and partly because some are half-hardy. Visiting local garden centres is a good horizon scanning exercise as they are often a source for local plantings and potential escapes. Fred then took us on a tour of some of the more common species. There are keys in his presentation, which is worth looking at.



*Cyrtomium fortunei*  
(**Fortune's Holly-fern**)

There is a genetic difference between our native *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (**Maidenhair Fern**) and those planted and they can be tricky to tell apart. *Cyrtomium fortunei* (**Fortune's Holly-fern**) sens. lat. is very variable. *Cyrtomium falcatum* (**House Holly-fern**) leaves are glossy

and leathery. Work is still needed on the group's circumspection. *Polystichum polyblepharum* (**Korean Tasselfern**) is much hairier and glossy than the native species. *Dryopteris cycadina* (**Shaggy Wood-fern**) is only once pinnate, with divisions only going about 1/3 of the way down the leaf, unlike *Dryopteris filix-mas* (**Male-fern**) where



*Dryopteris cycadina*  
(**Shaggy Wood-fern**)

they go all the way down. The scales on the rachis are almost black. *Dryopteris wallichiana* (**Alpine Wood Fern**) is possibly being overlooked as *Dryopteris affinis* (**Scaly Male-fern**). *Dicksonia* (**Tree-ferns**) start as a bit like *Dryopteris filix-mas* and there may be several species in the west. *Hypolepis ambigua* (**Pig Fern**) has only been found on Bute, but there might be other western escapes. In the past *Pteris cretica* (**Ribbon Fern**) and *Pteris multifida* (**Ribbon Fern**)

were often confused thanks to early keys. *Pteris umbrosa* is found in botanic garden hot houses. There are also water ferns such as *Azolla filiculoides* (**Water Fern**), which is widespread. *Azolla cristata* might also be present, but is difficult to tell apart vegetatively. Somewhat allied, we don't (yet) have *Equisetum hyemale* subsp. *affine* (**Rough Horsetail**), which is a big version of the native subspecies in the wild, but it is widely planted.

Mark Duffell then took us through some aquatic invasive non-native species (INNS). Eight such INNS are known from Shropshire (v.c.40), with a further six species listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act that are currently absent. He took us through the species in groups, beginning with floating species and showing specimens of them all. *Azolla filiculoides* has a boom and

bust cycle of around 5-6 years due to absorption of the nutrients that it needs from the water. As an aside he mentioned that *Eleocharis acicularis* (**Needle Spike-rush**) is often a weed in aquatic centres and might get introduced. Submerged species are often sold as “oxygenating plants” and may include species that should not be released. Cabombaceae (Water-shield family), which can look a bit like water-crowfoots but unlike them are opposite leaved, cannot be purchased. *Lagarosiphon major* (**Curly Waterweed**), where the leaves spiral round the stem, is quite widespread, but the plants are only female. *Elodea canadensis* (**Canadian Waterweed**) was once more common, but its population is declining, with *Elodea nuttallii* (**Nuttall's Waterweed**) now far more common. There may be some mis-identification in the records. *Myriophyllum aquaticum* (**Parrot's-feather**) is well known, and the Environment Agency has been good at eliminating it when reported. There are some other species coming that might be found. *Myriophyllum cristatum* is smaller, with reddish stems, whilst *Myriophyllum heterophyllum* has mostly entire leaves. Although *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* (**Floating Pennywort**) mostly spreads vegetatively, it can seed in the UK. It is still possible to purchase *Ludwigia peploides* (**Floating Primrose-willow**).



*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* (**Floating Pennywort**) (Mike Foley)

Although *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* (**Floating Pennywort**) mostly spreads vegetatively, it can seed in the UK. It is still possible to purchase *Ludwigia peploides* (**Floating Primrose-willow**).

We then broke for the usual FSC two course dinner, though it was augmented by the donation of bottles of wine for all those who wanted a drink to go with it. After dinner John O'Reilly gave us a talk about the work that he has been

doing in monitoring the populations of rare plants in upper Teesdale. This area has a significant population of several very rare plants and many nationally rare or scarce species, along with many that are on the England Red List with a significant threat status. There are also “Northern” species at the south edge of their range and “Southern” species that are at the north edge. There are a variety of habitats, including: meadows, banks and verges; river banks; limestone cliffs; open higher summits. There are sugar limestone habitats that can be dry or wet. The sugar limestone formed some 300 million years ago when the Whin Sill was intruded into the older Carboniferous limestone and produced a limestone with a very friable texture. About 20% of this was lost due to the construction of the Cow Green reservoir. The locations of plants were mapped prior to the construction, and some of those that would have been lost due to flooding were relocated to botanic gardens.

Margaret Bradshaw provided funding for a detailed



*Viola rupestris* (Teesdale Violet)

survey of rare species; for liaison with Natural England to inform the management and to engage others.

Mapping was needed because there were relatively few post 2000 records and only patches of the area had been covered. It is

a huge task as the

area covers roughly 20x30 km and the mapping (at least for the rare species) is being done on a 10x10 m grid. In addition there are over 100 species that need to be recorded at this level. Much of it is by vegetative identification as grazing means that flowering is relatively rare. Sometimes



expectations lead to an incorrect identification, though that is sometimes rectified on a subsequent visit. The project now has six years of data and 26,000 records but is nowhere near to covering the entire area. This may take another 30 years!

There is quite a different distribution of some species between Cronkley and Widdybank Fells, for example in where *Primula farinosa* (**Bird's-eye Primrose**) grows. Some species only grow on Widdybank Fell, eg *Viola rupestris* (**Teesdale Violet**). For others it is vice-versa with *Minuartia verna* (**Spring Sandwort**) more frequent on



*Minuartia verna* (**Spring Sandwort**)

Cronkley Fell and *Dryas octopetala* (**Mountain Avens**) and *Scabiosa columbaria* (**Small Scabious**) only growing there. *Carex caryophyllea* (**Spring-sedge**) and *Carex ericetorum* (**Rare Spring-sedge**) can be distinguished vegetatively as *Carex*

*ericetorum* has thicker leaves. Comparison with the 1970s survey shows a huge decline in many species, eg *Antennaria dioica* (**Mountain Everlasting**) has declined by 84%. Some new species have been found for example *Euphrasia ostenfeldii*.

After the talk many participants headed to the bar for drinks and further discussion. Before turning in I checked the weather forecast and decided that we might need to move the planned walks to Sunday. However on checking again in the morning, the odds had changed and it looked as if we might be drier on Saturday, so the walks were moved back again. The meeting programme started up again after



breakfast with Ian Denholm telling us about “What are referees asked about orchids?”. He started by saying that the BSBI needs to increase the profile of its referees (there were quite a few in the audience) as they are an under-recognised resource. The orchid referees (himself and Richard Bateman) have received about 1000 meaningful queries over 15 years. He then described some of the more topical issues they have been asked about.

Some species were new to Britain, for example



*Himantoglossum robertianum*  
(**Giant Orchid**)

*Himantoglossum robertianum* (**Giant Orchid**), which was originally planted on the bank of a disused railway, but now seems to be a self-sustaining colony. *Serapias parviflora* (**Small-flowered Tongue-orchid**) last flowered at its Devon/Cornwall site in 2008, but has recently reappeared on a London roof garden, which he has yet to see at first-hand. *Serapias lingua* (**Tongue-orchid**) appears to be established in a scrubby field at Tiptree, Essex, along with

*Anacamptis morio* (**Green-winged Orchid**). *Serapias vomeracea* (**Large-flowered Tongue-orchid**) was found on the verge of the M20 in Kent and also in a Suffolk vineyard, both in 2021. *Serapias cordigera* (**Heart-flowered Tongue-orchid**) appeared in an unmown lawn in Sheffield. Some of these at least are likely to be long-range natural arrivals, but it is extremely difficult to be certain of provenance.

Some species are increasing their range within Britain. *Orchis militaris* (**Military Orchid**) appeared in a Hertfordshire gravel pit in 2016 but the site was destroyed (unintentionally) in 2020. *Himantoglossum hircinum* (**Lizard**

**Orchid**) had its first recent Hertfordshire record in 2020, with six sites supporting this plant (mostly as singletons) in the same county in 2022. A similar expansion of range is being noted in many counties in southern England. During the Bangor ASM in 2013 Ian had predicted that *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* (**Southern Marsh-orchid**, SMO) would soon arrive in Anglesey, and the very next day it was found! SMO has increased considerably in recent years in northern England, colonising sites occupied by *D. purpurella* (**Northern Marsh-orchid**). Considerable genetic introgression is being reported as a result.

Some species are morphological mimics. The best



*Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides*  
(**Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid**)

example is the case of *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* (**Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid**). Plants closely resembling this species south of the line from the Wash to the Severn, are genetically *D. praetermissa*. There are also morphological oddities due to pigmentation differences that can cause identification difficulties: extra anthocyanin giving darker colours and some appearing white due to lack of anthocyanins and/or chlorophyll. There are some nomenclatural conundrums for

which the reasons were covered in the following talk. The Irish Marsh-orchid, originally described as *Dactylorhiza occidentalis*, has had to be renamed *Dactylorhiza kerryensis*, which has precedence at species level. *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* will probably have to be renamed for a similar reason.

For some specimens, especially within *Dactylorhiza*, the orchid referees (like those covering many other taxa)

are unable to provide a definite identification. Sometimes a group of odd plants appears as a cluster and these may originate from a single capsule. During questions Ken Adams said that a recent find of *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* (**Irish Lady's-tresses**) in Essex could conceivably have come in with peat compost.

The second talk in this session was from Chris Metherell telling us about the origins of botanical nomenclature and explaining why plant names change. Most of it boils down to similarities with the legal system [Chris is a lawyer], which often works on the basis of precedents. Once you understand why some name changes occur they may seem less threatening. Genetic studies can also lead to name changes. Getting into his talk he gave some examples of species names involving people, citing David Attenborough [who has *Blakea attenboroughii*, *Hieracium attenboroughianum*, *Nepenthes attenboroughii* and *Sirdavidia solannona* amongst others in the plant



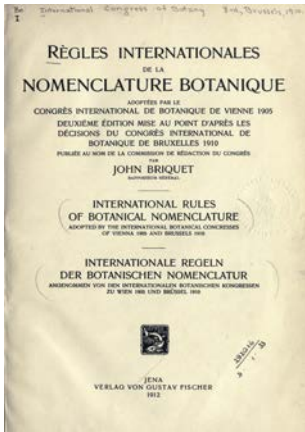
*Linnaea borealis* (**Twinflower**)

kingdom named after him] as well as amusing ones named after politicians or popstars. You aren't allowed to name things after yourself, but *Linnaea borealis* (**Twinflower**) was OK as it wasn't named by Linnaeus. A fashion in naming in the 19<sup>th</sup> century lead to a lot of duplicate names, for

example 30 of one *Euphrasia* (**Eyebright**). De Candolle suggested a solution, but this was ignored until 1912 when an international committee drew up a set of rules. These have been steadily modified over the years with the latest

edition being the Shenzhen Code of 2018. The delegates to these rule making meetings are essentially self-appointed as anyone can take part, and in the past this had led to “loading” of meetings by some factions.

The principle of the rules are that a species is defined



by a type specimen, usually in a herbarium, that has a unique name. The naming system starts from 1<sup>st</sup> May 1753 when Linnaeus published *Species Plantarum*. A type is a specimen to which a name is permanently attached. New names are invalid if they are not attached to a type, however names given prior to 1930 don't need to be typed, though one is usually found. The earliest name takes precedence, providing that

the rules have been followed. These state that the name must be effectively published (ie it is in the public domain), that it is validly published (ie follows the rules) and that it is a legitimate name (ie new). There is a different set of rules for zoology (eg they allow *Oenanthe oenanthe*) and for cultivated plants, but as yet there is no agreement on unification.

Chris then described the case of *Euphrasia foulaensis* as an example. This had been found by WH Beeby on Foula in 1887. It was named by him on a herbarium sheet as *E. hammerfeldiana*, but this was not effectively published. It was sent to the expert of the day, who published the name *E. foulaensis*. However in 2013 Beeby's specimens were found, and they don't look the same as the species, so an unnamed plant is still there. *E. frigida* was published in 1933, but wrongly typified and now needs to be renamed as *E. foulaensis*!

We broke for coffee, a quick look at Summerfield Books, more discussion and a final assessment of the weather forecast. My decision was that we should take the chance of going now and this proved correct – we had a short spell of light rain towards the end of the walks, but if we'd postponed to Sunday we'd have had a heavy shower or two. The group split into several parties each going in different directions. One went to Nesscliffe Hill Country Park, with the objective of re-finding *Dryopteris cambrensis* (**Narrow Scaly Male-fern**), which had been recorded there in 1999. Another group set off for some nearby churchyards, whilst others walked from the Centre, northwards, westwards or around the Centre grounds. The Nesscliffe party didn't find the *Dryopteris cambrensis* but did find *Dryopteris affinis* (**Golden Scaly Male-fern**). The churchyards party were impressed by the Waxcaps in Bicton churchyard and this was recommended

as a destination to the macrofungi group that was also staying at Preston Montford. The group heading north were impeded by a footpath that no longer existed. There were quite a few "LORE" species in the Preston Montford grounds, though the party only

found *Bolboschoenus maritimus* (**Sea Club-rush**) agg. This was actually *Bolboschoenus laticarpus*, but had not been updated in the DDb. Those going west found plenty to discuss, particularly when diverting from the footpath along a ditch bounding a flood meadow by the River Severn. On the way back Jonathan spotted an *Epipactis helleborine*



Botanists distracted by waxcaps at Bicton churchyard (Steve Woodward)

**(Broad-leaved Helleborine)** at the edge of some riverside woodland – an axiophyte that had never been seen in the Preston Montford area previously. Overall the groups made 866 records of 349 species, with 9 species being on all the cards and 177 only seen once.

Everyone was back in time for tea, particularly as it



*Succisa pratensis*  
**(Devil's-bit Scabious)**,  
North Pennines  
(Sergio Denche)

was accompanied by FSC cakes. Participants also had a chance to browse the wide selection of books and other accessories that Summerfield Books had brought, which were on display in the Wenlock classroom. Many people were tempted and made purchases. After tea we had a session devoted to computer linked issues, beginning with MapMate. Martin Rand gave an outline of the history of MapMate, which had enabled the BSBI to start electronic recording. However

there has been no development of the software since 2006, although the database (particularly species listings) are frequently updated. The BSBI DDb was originally developed to assimilate various data sources, including MapMate, in one place. The BSBI is developing an in house recording system, although it is a long time in gestation, and is also using iRecord. The BSBI has been at risk as only one person is employed to manage the database. The new app should be at least as easy to input data as MapMate, but it will not have the other functions of MapMate. The DDb or GIS systems such as QGIS could then be used for mapping. Martin then discussed various issues that people had with MapMate, including text import and syncing, whilst





(Trustee), Chris Miles (Chair of Trustees), John Palmer (Chair CfW) and Jonathan Shanklin (Chair CfE). Chris, Helena and I all took notes and the paragraphs that follow are a combination of these.

### **A Taxonomic Review Sub-committee**

With the announcement by Clive Stace that there will be no further editions of his flora, there is concern about which accepted taxonomy the BSBI should adopt in the future, as inevitable taxonomic reviews occur. There

is the big issue of how and who takes on the maintenance of a standard British Flora given that BSBI uses Stace as our taxonomic reference point. It was agreed that the DDb should be kept up to date to reflect an accepted



*Spiranthes spiralis* (**Autumn Lady's-tresses**), Jersey C.I. (Alli Singleton)

“BSBI List”, and that such a list would be needed by those concerned with Red Listing and Status Assessment. It was pointed out that the International Plant Names Index (IPNI) publishes newly proposed names, but it was felt that there should still be a BSBI List like that produced by the British Bryological Society (BBS) on a 5 or so year cycle. It was suggested that a Taxonomic Review panel might be set up by S&D with input from the referees panel and relevant experts. [Janet Higgins mentioned afterwards that she would be keen to join such a panel].

Other points made under this heading were than when teaching courses it was necessary to use the name given in the books that participants were using. It was confusing to always have to chop and change. The DDb

does however have synonyms for all current names, so it is possible to keep using “old” ones, though it was necessary to be careful when taxa had been more recently split. Valid name changes are straightforward, but others are a matter of opinion. [Although not specifically discussed, many recorders use Common Names and it is therefore helpful to have an equivalence list that includes these.]

### **Communication of BSBI Achievements**

One member, who had received an email suggesting that he may wish to donate to BSBI, informed the panel that he did not intend to give donations as BSBI does not own reserves or save species.

This sparked a discussion regarding the achievements and “assets” of the BSBI; it was explained that a major “asset” is the DDb, which does not exist without cost, and that the information within the DDb is widely used by the agencies etc, and that interpretation of the information requires the skills of the Scientific Team, which also needs financial support.

Another major asset of the BSBI is the botanical education and training provided (and this will increase as BSBI takes on FISCs and Identiplant); indeed, the combined knowledge of members is a vast “asset”.

It was pointed out that BSBI had recently sent a letter to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, calling on the government to honour its commitment to our wild flora (copied to 3 other parties):



*Knautia arvensis*  
(**Field Scabious**), Clayton meadow, Studland, Dorset (John Hunt)

some of those present were unaware of this, despite its publication on the website and in Recorders' eNews. Some did not know about Recorders' eNews. Another thing that BSBI Science Unit had done was to produce "heatmaps" showing high species diversity locations that should not be used for tree planting. These had been made available to Natural England and were now available as a layer in their mapping system. It was suggested that BSBI often pushes "bad news", whereas the media like "good news" stories.

It was clear that BSBI needs to be better at



*Pteridium aquilinum* (**Bracken**),  
at dawn, Woodloes Hill,  
Warwick  
(Lizzy Bradbury)

communicating its achievements to members and beyond, although it was pointed out that members could read about these in the Annual Review, and that much is published on the website, or in BSBI News. Some of us felt that perhaps more members could start by reading the communications and news already available! The challenge is explaining the tangible outputs of BSBI (eg people engaged, people

trained, records made, research and conservation informed, policy decisions influenced etc ) and how these add up to a body of work people might wish to support. Outside the meeting I was surprised that some active recorders did not realise NPMS was a joint BSBI/Plantlife project.

### **Support for Vice County Recorders**

It was generally felt that VCRs in countries with a Country Officer feel better supported. In Ireland, the presence of a Country Officer, and the use of social media begun by Maria

Long, has had a noticeable effect regarding recruitment of VCRs. Paul Green reported that about a quarter of Irish VCRs are under 30. It was pointed out that BSBI has just recruited a new Countries Support Manager (again, not everyone was aware of this!) which should help. New VCRs in particular need more support, including face-to-face support to help assess their needs, as this is patchy at present and especially if they are relatively new to recording. This is an important role for the Country Officers and the database team once established. The idea of recording apprentices was also suggested as a way of giving people a feel for the VCR role before they committed themselves. There were thoughts that in some vice-counties changing from the model of a single VCR to a loose group with several members of a team having different skills might make the role of VCR more manageable. There are



*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*  
(**Bluebell**), Honeysuckle  
Bottom, Surrey Hills  
(Chris Heath)

varying models of engagement between VCRs, LRCs and local councils and it may be necessary to have something bespoke in each county. When asked about covering VCR costs given the increase in travel costs etc there was a generally cautious response with a worry about asking fellow members to fund recording activity. This could then increase the expectations of members for the support that they might receive from their VCR.

The existence of local recording groups was considered very important for recruiting and supporting members and other botanists, who can then support the VCR. Again though, the existence and activity of such

groups is patchy. BSBI should consider what help it can give such groups including any support for meetings. (Outside the meeting I was asked whether there was anything BSBI can do to cover insurance for meetings, which is putting some people off from organising local meets – **provided a meeting is under the clear control of the BSBI it is covered by our third party insurance**). Such local groups are a good way of letting people who are not currently BSBI members about our field meetings. It would be good if Country Officers could attend some local group meetings, as they could help publicise the BSBI just by being seen to be present. Some local groups want to remain separate from the BSBI.

National field meetings in Wales have become less frequent, partly due to Covid.



*Coeloglossum viride* (**Frog Orchid**),  
Yorkshire (Paul Redshaw)

Perhaps we should push the value of field meetings as part of continuing professional development for ecological consultants. This could increase demand for field

meetings and perhaps boost membership too. We could set differential registration rates for residential meetings, for example having a student/VCR rate, a member rate and a non-member rate.

County pages are a great way to publicise the existence of these groups, but only if people actually look at the website! Ireland and Scotland seem better off as they have external funding for the posts.



## Identiplant, FISCs and other Training

There was much support for and relief that BSBI is taking on the running of Identiplant and FISCs. It is important that BSBI publicises this and also publicises the output and achievements which result from these products. In particular many young people are doing Identiplant and this is a group that we need to recruit.



*Beta vulgaris* subsp. *maritima* (**Sea Beet**), Chesil Beach (Mary Breeds)

It was noted that BSBI does need to provide training for the more expert botanists too. And also support those involved in botanical training. [Later, Chris Metherell gauged support for a proposed BSBI QGIS Training Event for Recorders] It was also pointed out that

Plantlife do training and produce training material, and BSBI could collaborate more with Plantlife on this.

The appetite for botanical training is growing amongst young people. It was reported that there were 22 teams participating in Botanical University Challenge this year. This could be extended to include college garden teams as well as students. One idea was that we might engage with RHS in some training offer to reach horticultural students to see whether their interest can be extended to wild plants.

## What follows the Atlas – Suggestions

It was explained that BSBI will be carrying out a Science Review (both of science and staffing) in 2023, so there will be no major projects until after that. VCRs, referees and

members will get a chance to feed into this. However, suggestions were invited for future activities for members after the launch of the Atlas. These included:

- A summer public engagement event on the scale of the New Year Plant Hunt, maybe some other kind of “hunt”, like bioblitzes or “botanical bingo” or plant race (like the 24hr bird race where as many species as possible are recorded in 24hs), which appeal to families. There could be handicaps set to even things out between species rich and species poor regions. When LRCs arrange bioblitzes they could target poorly recorded areas rather than nice, well-recorded sites.
- Engagement with gardens and estates, such as university campuses, and also with museums. [The talk on Grace Dieu was a brilliant example of how much can be found by focusing on a particular site – good for public engagement too]
- Urban Botany clearly has potential to reach new audiences and younger audiences and needs a bit of a push.
- We need to make sure that we keep up with the latest social media platforms.



*Silene noctiflora* (**Night-flowering Catchfly**),  
Somerset (John Bebbington)

Following the discussion, participants again headed to the bar for a convivial evening. Sunday was another half-day

event and our first session was led by Paul Green, the BSBI Irish Officer, who had kindly come across to give us a briefing on *Atriplex* (**Oraches**). Paul had run workshops in Ireland in 2017 and 2018 and had become enthusiastic about what others referred to as “ugly plants that don’t flower”. He was now the referee and was about to convince us otherwise on both counts. As referee he often gets boxes of 100 or more specimens to work through, which can be quite time consuming. To help with identification he had drawn up a key for the Irish species. Many books refer to the lower leaves, but these have often fallen off by the best time for identification, although the remains may be close to the plant. The leaves are either hastate (spear shaped with a truncate base) or trullate (shaped like a plasterer’s trowel).



Bracteole with stalk clearly showing  
(Ivor Rees)

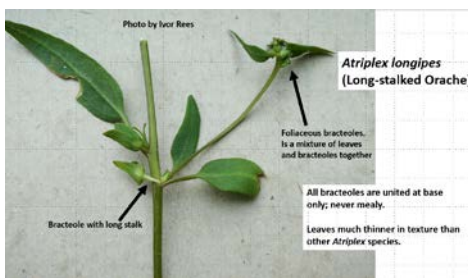
The bracteoles are the most important part and may be foliaceous (leafy). A short stalk can be very short, less than 0.5 mm, whilst long stalks can be over 70 mm. Long stalked species always have bracteoles that are free at the base.

Spongy bracteoles are usually small. United bracteoles are often not flat at the base. Having sorted out the terminology, Paul then took us through the species.

- *Atriplex patula* (**Common Orache**) really is common. It is often winter green.
- *Atriplex prostrata* (**Spear-leaved Orache**) has small bracteoles and is often variable in colour.

- *Atriplex glabriuscula* (**Babington's Orache**) is often purple and mealy. It is a coastal species. The leaves are thick and split at the top when bent.
- *Atriplex littoralis* (**Grass-leaved Orache**) has narrow leaves. The distribution is predominantly eastern, particularly inland along salted road verges. There is possible confusion with *Atriplex patula* but it is usually much more upright.
- *Atriplex longipes* (**Long-stalked Orache**) is rare,

mostly on south-west coasts, but on some eastern ones. It has long-stalked foliose bracteoles, thin leaves and is often tall and straggly. It needs some looking for.



*Atriplex longipes* (**Long-stalked Orache**) (Ivor Rees)

- *Atriplex praecox* (**Early Orache**) is an early fruiter (July) and is usually red, with thick leaves. It is very rare in England & Wales. It is possibly an early coloniser at the base of a salt marsh.
- *Atriplex laciniata* (**Frosted Orache**) has very frosty leaves and very hard bracteoles.
- *Atriplex portulacoides* (**Sea-purslane**) is a woody perennial.

Then there are the hybrids, which are often common and can be more so than the parents. All are fertile. They are

better recorded in Ireland, but the parents are often recorded instead of the hybrid.

- *Atriplex x taschereaui* (*A. glabriuscula x longipes*) likes bare shingle that is not too exposed. It is probably around most of the UK coast, but goes unrecorded. The first thing to do is check whether a bracteole has a stalk.
- In *Atriplex x gustafssoniana* (*A. longipes x prostrata*) (“At gus”) the larger bracteoles have a short stalk less than 5 mm, with longer stalks low down in the leaf axils. Populations are often variable in number and there can be large isolated plants.



*Atriplex x gustafssoniana*  
(*A. longipes x A. prostrata*)

- *A. littoralis x longipes* was found as a new plant for Ireland in 2016 and not yet found in the UK. It is a big plant, with leaves like *A. littoralis*, but bracteoles on stalks like *A. longipes*.
- *Atriplex x hulmeana* (*A. littoralis x prostrata*) has scattered records, often where recorders know of it. The leaves are like *A. littoralis*, but with some teeth.

In Ireland *Atriplex x gustafssoniana* is the most frequent species, followed by *Atriplex x taschereaui*, *Atriplex*

*prostrata* and *Atriplex glabriuscula*. The situation in England and Wales is likely to be different.



*Chenopodium ficifolium* (**Fig-leaved Goosefoot**) growing as a street weed in Cambridge

A workshop on *Chenopodium* had been asked for, however there were no experts present. Some specimens were brought along for participants to look at. There were rather limp examples of *Chenopodium album* (**Fat-hen**) and *Chenopodium ficifolium* (**Fig-leaved Goosefoot**) from

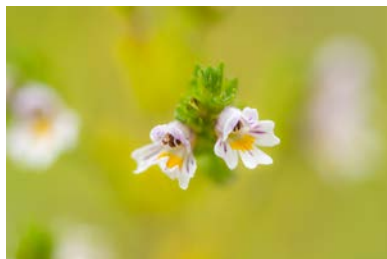
v.c.29, but my hopes of bringing others were dashed when I discovered that a rich patch of plants in a new scrape had all been strimmed and a visit to a site with a nearby conservation margin was cancelled. Anne Haden brought a rather dead specimen of *Chenopodium strictum* (**Striped Goosefoot**) from Jersey, which at least clearly showed the strongly ridged stem. Anne said that it had become the most frequently found species on the island, and Paul Green said it had also become common around Wexford. It proceeded to drop seeds all over the table, so it may soon be cropping up elsewhere! The DDb shows populations around Leeds and London, so it may be overlooked elsewhere.

After a coffee break we moved on to look at *Euphrasia*, where Chris Metherell had brought a selection of herbarium sheets which were laid out on tables in another classroom. In diploid species the long glandular hairs are obvious, whereas tetraploid species do not have them. The most stable character is height (node) of flowering. By contrast corolla length can be very variable.



- *Euphrasia scottica* and *E. micrantha* form an opposite pair in many characteristics.
- *Euphrasia arctica* is probably the most common species. It is a robust plant with wider triangular shaped leaves.
- *Euphrasia nemorosa* has narrow leaves with sharp teeth and is well branched. [Having seen the herbarium sheet I now wonder whether the v.c.29 plants often recorded as this are actually the hybrid as few have such narrow leaves.]

Chris is in the process of writing a monograph on the genus, which will be informed by genetic analyses. This will reduce *Euphrasia* to around eight species, with groups of well-defined entities within each species.



*Euphrasia* sp. (**Eyebright**), The Llama field, Warlingham, Surrey (Chris Heath)

Changing topic, Steve Woodward then took

us on a tour of Grace Dieu, a Leicestershire hotspot, with over 600 plant species, most of which is privately owned. The county has no well-known botanical sites, although records for *Rosa x irregularis* (*Rosa arvensis* x *canina*) [Formerly *R. x verticillacantha*] are concentrated around Leicester due to recorder effort, with A.L. Primavesi having lived there. It is the site of an old priory on the west edge of Charnwood Forest, which was perhaps historically a small version of the New Forest. The old priory is in the north of the site. There are lots of different habitats and the Loughborough Naturalists' Club aimed to record the flora and fauna of the site over its 79 compartments. Several

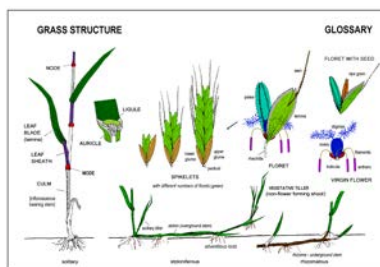
botanical refinds were made after a long interval, though over 140 species were not refound, for example *Atropa belladonna* (**Deadly Nightshade**). Some old records were discovered from paper records, but these were not always reliable or easy to find. Some digitisations didn't quite get things right, with *Cynoglossum officinale* (**Hound's-tongue**) being assigned to mammals. A report on Cademan Wood had some very unlikely records and was therefore disregarded as being a poorly supervised student project. There were some deliberate and some accidental introductions. As an aside in passing he noted that the black anthers that are sometimes seen on *Stellaria graminea* (**Lesser Stitchwort**) are caused by the smut *Microbotryum stellariae*. The reason why there was such a big species list was the diversity of habitats: acidic, limestone, late and low intensity agriculture and introductions combined with the LNC survey and other local records.



Anther smut *Microbotryum stellariae* on *Stellaria graminea* (**Lesser Stitchwort**)

Our final spot of the weekend was given over to Ken Adams who took us through the grass families, with tips on how to separate them. Ken had started recognising plants early in his career, having started tractor driving on a farm at age five and got to know his cornfield weeds using the little 'A Flower Book for the Pocket' by Macgregor Skene 1935. When Stanley Jermyn died, Ken was left with the task of producing the Flora of Essex in 1974. His Essex records are now working through the county recording every monad.

He had found that making side by side species diagrams were often a great help to him in learning identification. For us as a first step he covered learning the parts of grasses, followed by understanding how grass plants grow, before moving on to particular characteristics, particularly spikelets and ligules. Some grasses have spikelet/ligule combinations that are unique, making identification straightforward. He had produced beginners' keys, then keys to genera and also keys to particular frequently mis-recorded species. He also produced diagrams to help distinguish between reeds and non-grasses such as *Acorus*, *Iris*, *Sparganium* and *Typha*.



Grass structures

Ken then went through grasses from A to Z, though we ran out of time at *Poa*.

- *Apera spica-venti* (**Loose Silky-bent**), recognised by its very long lemma awn, is becoming a serious crop smothering cornfield weed on light soils in Essex.
- *Catapodium rigidum* (**Fern-grass**) has been split into two subspecies: *Catapodium rigidum* subsp. *majus* and the native *Catapodium rigidum* subsp. *rigidum*, and since 2000 the former has started to spread around our coastal areas.
- *Alopecurus geniculatus* (**Marsh Foxtail**) was sometimes mistaken for *Alopecurus aequalis* (**Orange Foxtail**) as its dehisced anthers are dull orange— the latter however has very short and the former very long lemma awns.

- *Agrostis* (**Bents**) are difficult and for absolute id an examination of the palea is needed. There is confusion between *Agrostis canina* (**Velvet Bent**) and *Agrostis vinealis* (**Brown Bent**). The former is a plant of damp acidic habitat. It can produce tufts of leaves on a stem, which is actually a vertical stolon. *A. vinealis* is usually tall. In *Agrostis capillaris* (**Common Bent**) the penultimate branchlet is at 90°, whereas in *Agrostis gigantea* (**Black Bent**) it is at c30°. *Agrostis castellana* (**Highland Bent**) has naked lower branches and has a tuft of hairs at the base of the terminal spikelets – it seems to be a decreasing species.
- *Polypogon viridis* (**Water Bent**) is a distinctive urban weed – the florets fall with the glumes leaving bare branches.

*Polypogon*

*monspeliensis*

(**Annual Beard-grass**)

formerly a rare SE coastal is now common inland in concrete cracks up to Manchester-Leeds with scattered records in Scotland.



*Agrostis stolonifera* x *Polypogon monspeliensis*

- *Polypogons* hybridise with *Agrostis*. A plant with 1 m long stolons and a dark inflorescence was X *Agropogon robinsonii* (*Agrostis stolonifera* var. *palustris* x *Polypogon viridis*). The hybrid is larger and more vigorous than the parents, with larger anthers. *Agrostis stolonifera* x *Polypogon monspeliensis* has a really beautiful inflorescence.

- *Bromus* is quite a big group, and several are increasing as crop smothering pests on direct drilled arable. *Anisantha sterilis* (**Barren Brome**) has a lax inflorescence compared to *Anisantha diandra* (**Great Brome**). The length of the glume is a better discriminant than the length of the spikelet. *Anisantha rigida* (**Ripgut Brome**) has a shorter pedicel and is more upright. *Anisantha tectorum* (**Drooping Brome**) has a branched inflorescence. *Anisantha madritensis* (**Compact Brome**) has an upright short stalked spikelet and has a branched tipped awn. *Anisantha rubens* (**Foxtail Brome**) has a mutation that makes the rachillas twist so that the awns come out in all directions.
- *Bromopsis benekenii* (**Lesser Hairy-brome**) is probably overlooked in chalky woods. The upper sheath is naked and it flowers a month earlier than *Bromopsis ramosa* (**Hairy-brome**).
- *Bromus secalinus* (**Rye Brome**) has a lemma and palea that are tightly wrapped around the seed and fall with it. In *Bromus lepidus* (**Slender Soft-brome**) the awn arises from the base of the cleft in the lemma whereas in the *B. hordeaceus* group it arises some way down the back of the lemma. *Bromus interruptus* (**Interrupted Brome**) has been re-introduced in a few places, but might have been overlooked somewhere as a native. There are some unusual sub-species of *Bromus hordeaceus* (**Soft-brome**).



*Anisantha rigida*  
(**Ripgut Brome**)

*Bromus hordeaceus* subsp. *molliformis* [formerly subsp. *divaricatus*] has bent spreading awns as do two rare alien species: *Bromus japonicus* (**Thunberg's Brome**) and *Bromus lanceolatus* (**Large-headed Brome**).

- *Poas* (**Meadow-grasses**) also cause trouble. *Poa bulbosa* (**Bulbous Meadow-grass**) disappears so early it can be missed. Although mostly coastal, it can occur inland, e.g. at Newmarket. *Poa infirma* (**Early Meadow-grass**) was overlooked initially and is now widespread. It is early flowering, with yellowish leaves by April. The fresh anthers are as wide as long. *Poa nemoralis* (**Wood Meadow-grass**), has a short ligule and stiff leaves held at 90° - the “Heil Hitler” plant! and often only has two florets. *Poa trivialis* (**Rough Meadow-grass**) is often in woods and can look similar at a glance, but has a long ligule. *Poa compressa* (**Flattened Meadow-grass**) is not necessarily only found on walls, preferring industrial concrete cracks and has a culm that is flat right to the top. *Poa humilis* (**Spreading Meadow-grass**) has a flattened basal shoot (but not the culm), fat chunky spikelets and is abundant in coastal grazing marshes. *Poa angustifolia* (**Narrow-leaved Meadow-grass**) is often confused with *Festuca rubra* agg. (**Red Fescue**). It is tall, early flowering, and common on road verges.



*Poa infirma* (**Early Meadow-grass**)



I hope that Ken will be able to complete the alphabet at a future Recorders' Meeting, but in the meantime you can find many of his keys at [Ken's Keys](#).

After the talk, those not rushing back home ate a leisurely packed lunch on the veranda of the Darwin classroom in the afternoon sunshine. Mark and I then checked and tidied all the classrooms before heading our separate ways. I decided I had time to visit one of the "Shanklins" [monads with no records] that was nearby and duly recorded 129 plant species for it. We are running another Recorders' Meeting in early October 2023, when we should be able to welcome 60 participants.

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## Recorders' Zoom Meetings

The Chair organised a round of Zoom meetings for recorders in early January. Due to pressure of time I allowed a free-for-all in choosing which meeting to participate in and this worked just as well as allocating meetings, with similar numbers at all three. By and large the meetings were conversations, where I updated participants on developments and they provided me with feedback, with no formal agenda.

Mostly I began with a run-through of plans for the England Atlas 2020 launch. The main International launch was on March 8, and the [online Atlas](#) and [summary report](#) (pdf) has been available from that point onwards. Ireland, Scotland and Wales had their launches in the days immediately



*Cirsium dissectum*  
**(Meadow Thistle)**,  
Swindale, Cumbria  
(Leif Bersweden)

following and included media and politicians in their primary target audience. A report on the event in England is on page 69.

There may be a QGIS workshop in the spring of next year. There is a Recorders' Meeting at the Field Studies Council Preston Montford centre in Shropshire from October 6-8. This costs £20 for registration and £144 for accommodation and meals. Booking is open so do sign up if you record for the BSBI.



*Oxalis acetosella*  
(**Wood-sorrel**), West  
Yorkshire  
(Alex Shuttleworth)

Mary Dean thanked all those who had organised field meetings in 2022 and offered them for 2023. There is quite a good distribution across the country, but she will start the process now for 2024 so that it is more evenly distributed next year.

Even if the VCR cannot organise a meeting it may be possible to get someone else to organise one, for example a partner organisation such as a local Wildlife Trust botanical society or U3A group.

I had organised a recorder survey in December and showed the results of the survey to date (22 responses) and took participants through it. There were quite a few suggestions for useful Handbooks and these were passed on to Liz Kungu, the new Editor. It may still not be possible to generate a Handbook as each will require a willing author with time to produce the material needed. Other results and comments were passed on to the Science & Data Committee or James Harding-Morris (the new BSBI countries support manager) as appropriate.

It is possible to upload RPR and axiophyte lists to the DDb if you can provide them to James Harding-Morris in a spreadsheet. There was a little discussion on RPRs –

Geoffrey Hall had just finished the Leicestershire one, producing it in two versions, one with grid references at tetrad resolution for public consumption. I had spent a couple of days on the annual update of my vc29 one, which is just a simple list giving county status and reasons for inclusion. The update had added a few species (including two of the Roses newly on the DDb with Stace 4 names), deleted a few and changed the status of quite a lot. It threw up a point that the DDb has already gone beyond Stace 4 names in a few cases.

Although not for the RPR, looking at increasing



*Silene flos-cuculi*  
(**Ragged-Robin**), Sheffield  
(Eleanor Lloyd)

aliens can be of interest, as can spotting aliens which are in decline. When this was mentioned at the second meeting I thought I'd mention a few examples to my county newsletter which I was putting together. I mentioned that *Bassia scoparia* (**Summer-cypress**) had been increasing, but seemed to have disappeared since 2020. Helena Crouch then said the situation was similar

in Somerset, so there may be some mileage in the idea.

A few people had problems running MapMate under Windows 11 – one suggestion was to try running it under compatibility mode with an earlier version of windows. Everybody agreed that updating the taxon library was a priority.

The monthly members (mid month) and recorders (end of month) eNews are not sent automatically to all members because of GDPR, so do sign up if you are not seeing them.

There was some discussion of iRecord and transfer



*Serratula tinctoria* (**Saw-wort**),  
(Clay Jones)

of records to the DDb. One initial problem is that Tom Humphrey needs to visit CEH-Wallingford in order to enable any transfer, so none had happened since April 2021. Some iRecord records are dubious to say the least – for example consultants recording *Plantago* sp. as

well as rare or unusual plants, or providing a six-figure grid reference for aquatics which is nowhere near any water. Use of a pseudonym, will cause many VCRs to immediately reject records. This applied to the NYPH as well. Some consultants expect to see their records verified as a means of giving them added value, in which case they should be paying for it. A great suggestion was that all iRecord records should include the FISC status of the recorder [set low by default]. This could be beneficial all round. We do need BSBI guidelines, both to users of iRecord on what constitutes an acceptable botanical record, and to VCRs on techniques for verification. It would also help to have a verification tool on the DDb that would allow various filters to be set at VCR discretion to leave only those records which need VCR scrutiny. Several VCRs mentioned that they cannot currently access verification of iRecord records on the DDb.

Tom Humphrey was still working on the new BSBI recording app, and it was unlikely to be available for testing before the summer. With many VCRs still maintaining their own MapMate databases it needed to be possible to generate sqz export files from the DDb that would give ownership to the VCR for local editing.

The British Government has launched a new Biosecurity Strategy, which mostly concentrates on plant

pathogens and diseases. There might be scope for botanists to recognise sick plants and report them. Another area might be investigating compost (eg coco-peat or coir) aliens in garden centres, nurseries or at home. If plants are coming in, then biosecurity is probably lax.

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## The Atlas 2020 Launches

Steve Gater and Jonathan Shanklin

The primary audience for the England launch was the contributors who recorded for the Atlas and members. In the event there were two independent launches: a hybrid launch, centred at the British Antarctic Survey Cambridge (BAS) linking the online audience through Zoom and an independent launch at the Great North Museum: Hancock in Newcastle.



The Atlas cakes at Cambridge

At Cambridge, early arrivals had the chance to inspect a living exhibit of a small species rich meadow managed for biodiversity, take a tour of the BAS Herbarium, inspect an exhibition of county Floras, read some poster exhibits and view local herbarium specimens provided by Alan Leslie. A media session began with a viewing of Kevin Walker's pre-recorded introduction followed by a formal cake cutting by the

local MP, who happens to be the shadow Environment Secretary. During the break the online audience viewed a selection of entries from BSBI photographic competitions showing plants in England.

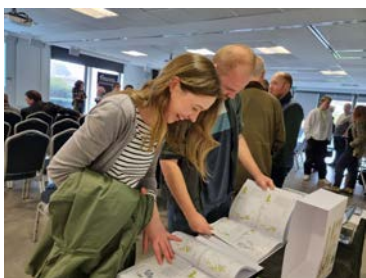
Micheline Sheehy Skeffington gave a Presidential welcome to the science sessions, beginning with some in-depth talks chaired by Astrid Biddle (VCR for Hertfordshire). Chris Preston Looked back at previous Atlases, Pete Stroh spoke

about the Making the Plant Atlas and Rich Burkmar (CEH-BRC) gave a demo of the online Atlas. There was then a break for tea and a chance to eat some of the cake. The talks in the final session, chaired by Lucy Wilson (BCN Wildlife Trust), were: Outline science results (Oli Pescott, CEH-BRC), a local perspective (Jonathan Shanklin, VCR for Cambridgeshire), How the data will be used (Mags Cousins, Natural England – Zoom) and concluded with a Valedictory (David Roy, CEH-BRC). All



Exhibition area and cake cutting at Cambridge.

these talks are available on the BSBI Youtube channel. A couple of small groups met together for a meal after the event. The BAS students were very grateful that BSBI members didn't manage to eat all the cake on the day, so that one volume was still available to eat on Monday!



Delight at the new Atlas, Newcastle

The chance to liaise with the Natural History Society of Northumbria (NHSN) to plan and run this event was most appropriate and welcomed. The North East has some amazing botanists and naturalists that build on a fine history that includes folk such as William Turner, William Oliver, Thomas Bewick.

The venue was The Great North Museum; Hancock, and the rooms suited this prestigious event very well, including stairs chosen for a photo opportunity to capture delegates, some 60 plus.

An afternoon programme of talks covered an introduction by former BSBI President, Chris Metherell, and overview of the activities of the NHSN by Senior Naturalist, James Common. Interestingly James has recently teamed up with Chris as



assistant VCR for v.c.68, North Northumberland. Angus Lunn shared his encyclopaedic knowledge of botanical recording in the North East, a fascinating catalogue of prominent and pioneering botanists. A recording of the keynote speech given by Kevin Walker was very clear and much appreciated. It led to a few questions that Chris answered, then a chance to mingle with the crowd of well-pleased botanists over coffee.



The participants at the Newcastle launch

An overview of the use of BSBI data by Natural England, with some specific examples, emphasized the importance of such a vital source of information for decision making and conservation actions. The value of data in Atlas 2020 and BSBI DDb was most evident and it was heartening to hear how the

recording effort of so many people over twenty years can help to steer future policy towards better outcomes for wild plants. Chris Metherell spoke of botanical recording and discoveries in the North East and thanked all VCRs and botanists for their contribution to the Atlas and to on-going recording.

Finally, former BSBI President Lynne Farrell gave a short valedictory and had the joy of cutting the cake, the top of which was most appropriately decorated with the Atlas 2020 cover. So, after taking a group photograph, everyone enjoyed coffee, cake and conversation to end a splendid afternoon. Thank you to all for attending, speaking, planning, NHSN for hosting, Jonathan Shanklin and BSBI staff for support.

Printed copies of the summary report were distributed to all VCRs and major contributors to the Atlas and to participants at the launches. It is also available online on the BSBI web page. The Atlas itself is a very weighty pair of volumes and many details are also available through the online atlas. Members still get a 30% discount on the published price of £132.

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## Vice-county reports for 2022

*Thanks to James Harding-Morris for providing these reports, which have been edited into a common format by the Editor. Individual styles have been retained in most cases. Any mistakes arising as a consequence of the editing are the Editor's fault. Illustrations come from the VCRs, their web pages, entries to the BSBI photographic competition and myself. In order to get at least one image on each page, they don't necessarily go with the county report.*

v.cc.1 & 2, [East Cornwall](#) Colin French & Ian Bernallick



*Claytonia sibirica* (**Pink Purslane**), Alnwick  
(John Dalrymple)

In the thirteen years that led up to the publication of the *Flora of Cornwall* in 2020 the Botanical Cornwall Group was systematically surveying every 1 km square of Cornwall and on average 102,808 vascular plant records were added to the ERICA database each year. Since then, there has been an understandable relative lull in recording activity (on average 60,523 were added to ERICA), which was no doubt exacerbated by the pandemic. Even so the background level of recording is nearly twice the amount it was prior to 2007 (on average 33,235).

Since the publication of the 2020 *Flora of Cornwall*, the majority of the main recorders have continued their recording activities and their combined voluntary effort remains very pleasing. The main focus has been on revisiting 1 km squares that were surveyed before 2010

which have had little attention since. In this way the data class for recording in Cornwall has been moved forward one decade. It is also heartening to report that several other keen recorders have now appeared and are contributing very valuable records. They include Billy Fullwood, a teenager who has made an impact nationally within BSBI; Louis Parkerson, a first-year degree student, who among many other interesting finds discovered a new site for the *Trichomanes speciosum* (**Killarney Fern** sporophyte); Philip Markey who has a special interest in Elms, and David Steere who has recorded across Cornwall since his arrival.

Billy Fullwood set up a Botanical Cornwall Group Whatsapp group which has proved to be useful in alerting those that have joined, over 30 people so far, finds or interesting botanical news.



*Plantago lanceolata* (**Ribwort Plantain**), Nottinghamshire (Helen Leaf)

Two areas were surveyed in very great detail in 2022; namely the Caerhays Estate and the Gwithian Towans and Gwithian Green LNRs.

These were surveyed to assist the planning of ecologically sensitive land management and the obtaining of grants to fund such schemes. However, the large amount of computerised data does have many potential uses and will probably be useful for other purposes in the future.

Ian Bernallick organised 17 Botanical Cornwall Group field meetings which was attended by between three and 17 people, and over fifty different people came along. Many records were updated for monads and new sites of species found.

Meetings on the Lizard Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June were part of a visit from scientists from the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (RBG, Kew) who

collected plant material from over 40 species for genome sequencing towards the [Darwin Tree of Life](#) (DToL) project. Up to 20 people came along and each person was given the chance to collect the material and make a specimen as a voucher for the plant collected. A report can be seen here on the [DToL website](#).

### **v.c.1b, Scilly**

### **Rosemary Parslow & Liz Askins**

It has not been easy to get to Scilly for the past couple of years so most plant recording has been by Liz Askins who is resident on the islands. Liz has been systematically recording arable weeds on two farms on St Mary's, which she started in 2021 and has been carrying out at regular intervals. With the major downturn in bulb farming on the islands the recording of the associated bulb field weed species is now very important.

Possibly due to increased management work several iconic plants have spread on wetland sites.



*Erophila verna*  
**(Common Whitlowgrass)**

In early December Rosemary Parslow was able to visit the small island of St Agnes with a group of staff and volunteers from the IOS Wildlife Trust. The object was to demonstrate how to monitor *Ophioglossum lusitanicum* (**Least Adder's-tongue**) which is only found on Scilly and Guernsey. Although 100 ferns were counted, few fertile fronds were found, most of which had already shed their

spores unusually early. Is this an indication of climate change?

### Interesting Finds:

- *Stellaria aquatica* (**Water Chickweed**). New species for the Isles of Scilly in 2022
- *Erophila verna* (**Common Whitlowgrass**). New species for the Isles of Scilly in 2022

### v.c.3, [South Devon](#) Roger Smith



*Cytisus scoparius* subsp. *maritimus* (**Prostrate Broom**)

The discovery of of *Cytisus scoparius* subsp. *maritimus* (**Prostrate Broom**) on the cliff slopes at Bilbury Down in April by Daniel Brown was the first for v.c.3 and a new site for *Thelypteris palustris* (**Marsh Fern**) found by Phil Sansum in a small area of wet woodland on Little Haldon, is a

second extant site for both v.c.3 and Devon.

Following the discovery of *Adonis annua* (**Pheasant's-eye**) in mid-May on a new roadside near Highweek by Sally Peacock and Richard Mabbutt several unusual aliens were found on the verge which had been sown in 2021 when several hundred metres were dominated by *Centaurea cyanus* (**Cornflower**). These included *Malope trifida* (**Mallow-wort**), *Nigella hispanica* (**Spanish Love-in-a-mist**) and and *Silene pendula* (**Nodding**



*Nigella hispanica*  
(**Spanish Love-in-a-mist**)

**Catchfly**) all new to v.c.3 and Devon.

Later in June, Chris Wilkinson, a visiting lepidopterist, found *Phelipanche purpurea* (**Yarrow Brooonrape**) searching for Thrift Clearwing moths on the coast at Aymer Cove, the first confirmed record for v.c.3 and Devon. Visitors are always welcome, particularly experts like Geoffrey Kitchener who was able to give me records of several *Rumex* (**Dock**) hybrids including two for which I had no localised records.



*Phelipanche purpurea*  
(**Yarrow Brooonrape**)

The tricky identification of *Euphrasia* (**Eyebright**) hybrids, taken up by both Alex Worsley and Lionel Pike with help of Chris Metherel resulted in additions of more records for four uncommon hybrids on Dartmoor and Lionel, with the help of Roger Golding has taken on the even more esoteric problem of *Dryopteris affinis* (**Golden-scaled Male-fern**) segregates and discovered *D. pseudodisjuncta* and *D. lacunosa* together with others in a small area of Dartmoor.

#### **v.c.4, [North Devon](#) Bob Hodgson, Jeremy Ison & Bob Kirby**

The Devonshire Association Botany Section has continued to organise a program of field meetings. There has, however, been little recording activity this year apart from that undertaken by Bob Kirby. Taking advantage of the



unkempt gutters left following Covid, this has focused on suburban areas. An invitation to record on various Barnstaple allotments produced some interesting finds, whilst also turning up some species new to the vice-county. Around 3800 records have been collected, updating a range of older ones and re-finding some “lost” species. The suburban emphasis provided a clearer picture of the habitat preferences and spread of several of North Devon’s rarer neophytes (some of which proved locally frequent in such habitats). Useful contact with the rangers at Northam Burrows was established, and some training was provided. Some limited fieldwork in support of project LORE was undertaken, and proved reasonably successful.

### Interesting Finds

- *Allium carinatum* (**Keeled Garlic**). Conf. Paul R. Green. Two plants in a gutter in Mill Road, Landkey. An unusual habitat for the species. Found by Bob Kirby. NCR.



*Allium carinatum*  
(**Keeled Garlic**)



*Avena sterilis*  
(**Winter Wild-oat**)



*Campanula alliariifolia*  
(**Cornish Bellflower**)

- *Avena sterilis* (**Winter Wild-oat**). Conf. Oli Pescott. Two plants at Higher Raleigh, Barnstaple. Found by Bob Kirby. NCR.

- *Campanula alliariifolia* (**Cornish Bellflower**). Conf. Ian J. Bennallick. Two as pavement weeds in Staddon Road, Appledore. Found by Bob Kirby. 2CR. An attractive species last reported in 1948.

- *Chenopodium strictum* (**Striped Goosefoot**). Conf. John R. Akeroyd. About twenty plants at Higher Raleigh, Barnstaple. Found by Bob Kirby. NCR.



*Chenopodium strictum*  
(**Striped Goosefoot**)

- *Elatine hexandra* (**Six-stamened**



*Elatine hexandra*  
(**Six-stamened Waterwort**)

- **Waterwort**). Wistlandpound Reservoir. Not seen for twenty-seven years despite a number of visits to the site. Thirty-seven plants were found by Bob & Stephanie Kirby. Second record for the site, one of only two in the v.c.
- *Fumaria bastardii* var. *hibernica* (**Tall Ramping-fumitory**). Appledore. Found by Bob Kirby (conf. Tim

Rich). 2CR for this rarer variety, the previous was in 1931.

- *Gentianella amarella* subsp. *occidentalis* (**Dune Gentian**). An additional population was discovered on Braunton Burrows. Conf. Tim Rich and reported by Mary Breeds.



*Fumaria bastardii* var. *hibernica*  
(**Tall Ramping-fumitory**)

- *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (**Four-leaved Allseed**). Third and fourth records, with Bob Kirby finding a handful of plants in Great Torrington and then in excess of 10,000 plants, occupying almost every joint across the entire road surface of a block-paved close at Landcross.



*Polycarpon tetraphyllum*  
(**Four-leaved Allseed**)

- *Hirschfeldia incana* (**Hoary Mustard**). Found by Bob Kirby at Anchorwood Bank, Barnstaple (last recorded in that hectad in 1917) and Appledore (new for hectad).



*Hirschfeldia incana*  
(**Hoary Mustard**)

- *Spergularia bocconeii* (**Greek Sea-spurrey**). First record found by Bob Kirby (conf. Tim Rich) on a pavement in Westward Ho! Subsequently found by him nearby on a track at Northam



*Spergularia bocconeii*  
(**Greek Sea-spurrey**)

Burrows in car parking areas at Hartland and Great Torrington, and on a pavement at Bideford.

#### v.c.5, [South Somerset](#)      **Stephen J Parker and Simon J Leach**

With considerable help from Somerset Rare Plants Groups, Somerset Botany Group, BSBI members and other local botanists, recording in South Somerset was very productive in 2022 with over 26,000 records added to BSBI database via Mapmate in 2022.

Records of new and interesting plants are reported every year in the Somerset Rare Plants Group Newsletter, this is compiled by Dr Helena Crouch and published in the Somerset Rare Plants Group Newsletter. This includes the ongoing studies by local botanists on critical taxa including *Taraxacum* and *Dryopteris* and other groups.

Thirty new species were recorded for v.c.5 Somerset, these included *Notobasis syriaca* (**Syrian Thistle**) a modern 'first' for GB. Two new species of *Chenopods* (*C. bushianum* and *C. strictum*).

The Somerset/SANHS Herbarium has had more than 1000 specimens added since we started work on it back in 2016/17.

A key objective of the year was to encourage new recorders in Somerset. During the year five short training

courses were run in different habitats for new and improving botanists in recording and plant identification in the field.

Over the year there were three presentations to Somerset conservation groups on the work of the Somerset Rare Plants Group and the BSBI.

Training in aquatic plant identification was given to 20 members of the Wessex Team of Natural England to help with condition assessments on the Somerset Levels SSSIs and botanical surveys of new Natural England land were carried out and the results sent to the local NNR manager.



Somerset Rare Plants Group

### Interesting Finds

- *Notobasis syriaca* (**Syrian Thistle**) probably a modern 'first' for GB too (the handful of previous records, none of them on the DDb, all seem to be pre-1950).
- *Anemone coronaria* (**Poppy Anemone**). One plant by stream, probably from garden rubbish. Record by Stephen Parker
- *Chenopodium bushianum* (**Soyabean Goosefoot**) beside muck heap in corner of field. Record by Graham Lavender
- *Lagenaria siceraria* (**White-flowered Gourd**). climbing a dead Elm at edge of overflow car park of curry house. Record by Fred Rumsey.
- *Malus hupehensis* (**Hupeh Crab**). One multi-stemmed small tree adjoining fence on edge of railway waste ground, N side of station, apparently self-sown, recorded by Simon Leach and Stephen Parker.



- *Primula pulverulenta* (**Mealy Cowslip**) Crowcombe Bridge 9 May, in field which has been un-grazed , Mark Wilson
- *Bidens frondosa* (**Beggarticks**) several plants flowering/fruitleting on nearside bank of rhyne. Record by Graham Lavender

**v.c.6, [North Somerset](#) Helena Crouch**

2022 was truly an *annus horribilis* in v.c.6 with the deaths of Clive Lovatt and Liz McDonnell. They leave a huge hole in the botanical community of Somerset. Nevertheless, over 54,000 records were made in v.c.6, by many different recorders; all now input and sent to the DDb.

Somerset Rare Plants Group welcomed several new members and the programme included 7 field meetings in v.c.6, with 21 participants on one. [Reports of SRPG meetings.](#)

Somerset Botany Group met weekly, mostly doing monitoring on reserves for Somerset Wildlife Trust. SBG also undertook churchyard surveys: I did three, wrote reports, and gave a talk on “Beautiful Burial Grounds for Biodiversity” to a local environmental group. I gave three other talks to



Alison Evans beside *Dryopteris kerryensis*

local groups, on the flora of the Cam & Wellow valleys, and flora of the Mendip Hills, and I spoke at the BSBI B&IB Conference on Botanical Treasures of Somerset.



Mendip Flora Group also met weekly, led by Andrew Robinson, who contributed >10,000 records, made personally or with the group.

I led 20 botanical walks for Cam Valley Wildlife Group and one for Bristol Naturalists' Society. For Bath Nats I co-led two fungal forays and led two botanical meetings, [including one with 24 attendees](#). I led a follow-up meeting at Friary for local residents, walks for Avon Wildlife Trust and Somerset Wildlife Trust, and botanical walks for residents in Shepton Mallet and Norton St Philip.



*Datura ferox* (**Angel's-trumpets**)

I also led my first BSBI field meeting, with 24 botanists attending over two days, visiting Crook Peak and Sand Point.

The [Rare Plant Register](#) remains an ongoing project, with the list kept updated and species accounts added gradually.

### Interesting Finds

- *Dryopteris kerryensis* (**Irish Male-fern**) and *Dryopteris pseudodisjuncta*. Both these ferns within the *Dryopteris affinis* complex were found in v.c.6, new to Somerset, during a visit to Stockhill by



*Erigeron annuus*  
(**Tall Fleabane**)

Alison Evans and Roger Golding [See BSBI News 152]

- *Nepeta cataria* (**Cat-mint**). A single plant of this Vulnerable species was found at Charlton Mackrell by John Poingdestre, where last recorded in 1997. This is the first post-2000 Somerset record for this declining species.

- *Valerianella eriocarpa* (**Hairy-fruited Cornsalad**) This Nationally Rare species was re-found at Charlton Mackrell by Fred Rumsey, where last recorded by SRPG in 2000. Hundreds of plants were seen in flower.



*Valerianella eriocarpa*  
(**Hairy-fruited Cornsalad**)

- *Euphrasia pseudokernerii* forma *elongata* (**Chalk Eyebright**) Found by Fred Rumsey at Appledoor Quarry, which is a disused lime quarry with an interesting area of fen vegetation supporting *Epipactis palustris* (**Marsh Helleborine**). This is only the second known site for *E. pseudokernerii* in v.c.6 and Somerset and the first for this form.



*Euphrasia pseudokernerii*  
(**Chalk Eyebright**)

- *Datura ferox* (**Angel's-trumpets**) Several plants of this impressive alien were found by Helena Crouch

and Fred Rumsey on a disturbed road verge at Congresbury, the first record for Somerset.

- *Sedum praealtum* (**Greater Mexican Stone-crop**) Found amongst the boulders of the sea defences at Portishead Dock by Clive Lovatt and Helena Crouch & Bristol Nats members, new to Somerset.



*Sedum praealtum*  
(Greater Mexican Stone-crop)

- *Erigeron annuus* (**Tall Fleabane**). Found by Rob Randall on a traffic island by the A46 at Upper Swainswick, Bath, the first record for v.c.6 since 1942. This is a more widespread alien on the continent and may become more common in Britain and Ireland.

### **v.cc.7, 8, [North Wiltshire & South Wiltshire](#) Richard Aisbitt and Kat Newbert**

We are hoping to reach a good enough coverage of Wiltshire to publish a new county Flora (there have been four so far, going back to 1858 – or five, if you count Aubrey’s 1847 ‘Natural History of Wiltshire’). Further visits in 2022 to under-recorded kilometre squares added over 25,000 records and filled many gaps.

Downloads of records from other schemes – iRecord, iNaturalist, Living Record – and data sharing with our county BRC brought in another 40,000 records, many from earlier years. Martin Buckland has completed his update of the [Wiltshire RPR](#) and this is now on the BSBI Website.

The Wiltshire Botanical Society had a full programme of spring and summer visits, which included training events, with Brean Down in Somerset and Fritham in the New Forest as out-of-county highlights. Six students completed the Identiplant course with Wiltshire tutors.

## Interesting Finds

- We continue to see more halophyte species: *Atriplex littoralis* (**Grass-leaved Orache**) is a new find in v.c.7. It was found along with *Spergularia marina* (**Lesser Sea-spurrey**), which is increasingly common. Also, *Plantago coronopus* (**Buck's-horn Plantain**) can now be found on many salted roadsides.
- A colony of *Cynoglossum germanicum* (**Green Hound's-tongue**) was a surprise find by Alex Prendergast (his photo) on Salisbury Plain. How this rare Schedule 8 species got to this isolated spot is a mystery. The plant is also known in Swindon, where it is thriving at several sites, but is known to be a deliberate introduction.
- *Bidens frondosa* (**Beggarticks**) has been found along the Kennet and Avon Canal in v.c.6 Somerset, but was not known in Wiltshire. Suspecting it should also be in Wilts, Dave Green searched eastwards along the K&A and finally found five plants growing out of canal-side masonry at Murhill in v.c.8.



*Cynoglossum  
germanicum*  
(**Green Hound's-  
tongue**)

- *Alchemilla glaucescens*. Until recently, *Alchemilla filicaulis* subsp. *vestita* (**Common Lady's mantle**) was the only *Alchemilla* recorded in Wiltshire apart from Garden Lady's-mantle *A. mollis*. Then Dave (he keeps spotting rarities) noticed that one of his finds was odd, and re-determined it as *A. glaucescens*, a northern species. This was confirmed by the BSBI referee, Mark Lynes. It may have arrived on imported limestone chippings.



*Alchemilla glaucescens*

### v.c.9, [Dorset Robin Walls](#)

For the first time at the Silverlake translocation site three flower spikes of *Lobelia urens* (**Heath Lobelia**) were found outside the enclosure where Hurst Heath plants were planted. Work is planned to control the willow and other shrubs threatening to overwhelm the site. *Mentha pulegium* (**Pennyroyal**) is also doing well. At Hurst Heath, the donor site, the vigorous *Molinia caerulea* (**Purple Moor-grass**) growth and bramble need controlling. A working party is planned for February with the help of Alaska.

In September Dr. Fred Rumsey gave us a workshop on British ferns at Kingcombe. After lunch he showed us some of the ferns and horsetails in the reserve. In October he returned to Dorset to investigate a 2018 report from Mark Gurney of *Gymnocarpium dryopteris* (**Oak Fern**) at Arne.

He found two patches of around 20 small plants after a lot of searching. This is a site well outside its known range in Britain. As a remote site on private land and introduction is unimaginable.

A second addition to the Dorset Rare Plant Register is *Valerianella rimosa* (**Broad-fruited Cornsalad**). Alex Mills refound this along the coast path; first sighting in Dorset since 1987. The species has suffered a 74% decline in area of occupancy in England.

Currently there are 341 taxa in the DRPR. 141 of these are of least concern (LC) and the remainder range from Near Threatened to Extinct in the Wild.



*Centaurium erythraea*  
(**Common Centaury**), Badbury Rings, Dorset (Mark Pike)

## Interesting Finds

- *Astragalus glycyphyllos* (**Wild Liquorice**) was found in a small wood at Chettle during an SSCI survey early in the year. From the very young sheets Carolyn Steele and Mariko Whyte worked out what it was. We returned later in the year to confirm the identification. (photo M. Whyte). This is a third site for Dorset in an area of what might have been an extensive Cranborne Chase woodland. There may be other plants in the remnant copses scattered across the farmed landscape.
- *Illecebrum verticillatum* (**Coral Necklace**) is a small plant that occurs sporadically in Dorset. It is more common in the New Forest. It may be spreading. Jon Crewe and Robert Sharp found it at Lower Common, Verwood.



- The most extraordinary new find for the county this year was *Juncus capitatus* (**Dwarf Rush**). Bryan Edwards found several hundred plants in the tightly mown U3 grassland with bare areas this at RAO, West Moors. This is the only site outside Cornwall and the Channel Islands, apart from a declining population in Anglesey; and the most inland site. One can only imagine seed was carried on military vehicles

**v.c.11, [South Hampshire](#) Martin Rand**

BSBI and Hampshire Flora Group members recorded across the vice-county; 28,000 records were added to the database in 2022, 15,000 of which are from 2022. Group meetings that I led included recording for various purposes on the unenclosed New Forest and on private estate land within the Forest National Park. Group and personal trips also entailed extensive recording in the Itchen Valley from Winchester to Southampton, and calcareous spring-fed mires in the south-west of the vice-county.



*Pulmonaria longifolia*  
(**Narrow-leaved Lungwort**)

I have participated in monitoring and controlling invasive non-native species on the New Forest (led by the county Wildlife Trust) and in the chalk-stream Test and Itchen catchments (led by Wessex Rivers Trust).

I ran a series of online workshops on identification of native and established alien evergreen broadleaves, followed by two field trips; also some informal trips for smaller groups of people to help them in learning families such as Cyperaceae.

Tony Mundell (v.c.12) and I have encouraged local botanists to participate in the LORE project, but this has not proven very appealing and can involve a lot of car travel for little result. We have asked people to focus on records in their immediate area. We are both eager to encourage more people to undertake detailed recording of threatened plant populations along the lines of the TPP, and we shall be running a workshop on this in early spring. In 2022 I made a start on re-recording Juniper sites, and this will continue (along with other taxa) in 2023.

**v.c.12, [North Hampshire](#) Tony Mundell**

3,861 records dated in 2022 were added to MapMate in v.c.12, so nothing like the 32,458 recorded in 2019 as we rushed to include as many records as possible for Atlas 2020.

I led, or co-led, four meetings of the Hampshire Flora Group at Hatch Warren , Chilbolton Down Farm and Magdalen Hill Down (on two dates). With a few others, I participated in many ‘LORE’ searches for particular old records of plants not recorded since 2000 at the specified site, or anywhere else in that whole hectad. In all, 83 LORE searches were made in v.c.12 but only 18 (22%) were re-found.

I also organised surveys with a few botanical colleagues of Eden County Park for the local Hart District Council, pointing out rarities like *Hypochaeris glabra* (**Smooth Cat’s-ear**) and *Scleranthus annuus* (**Annual Knawel**) to the Countryside Services warden.

I and a few others also helped the Wessex Rivers Trust with their survey of selected plant species in



*Filago lutescens*  
(**Red-tipped  
Cudweed**)

Hampshire's rivers, including the Test and Itchen. Some of us also participated in a related project to survey a flood plain meadow at Northington.

For botanical activities in Hampshire download our ['Flora News'](#) newsletter.

### Interesting Finds

- *Filago lutescens* (**Red-tipped Cudweed**) is still hanging on at a roadside site near Fleet where known since 1980. 32 plants in 2022 following a splendid rotavation by Hampshire County Council in March 2022 to disturb the soil.



*Cynoglossum germanicum*  
(**Green Hound's tongue**)

- *Cynoglossum germanicum* (**Green Hound's tongue**). Many hundreds of plants in several separated woodland spots in same general area near Farnborough. Photo by Caroline Reid.

- *Sagittaria subulata* (**Dwarf Arrowhead**) is not yet lost from North Hampshire as claimed in Stace. A rare alien, known at Shortheath Pond since 1962, thought lost but re-found by Fred Rumsey in 2019 after an 11 year gap. Large patch photographed by Steve Povey in 2022.



*Sagittaria subulata*  
(**Dwarf Arrowhead**)

- *Orobanche hederæ* (**Ivy Broomrape**). 2022 photo by Peter Vaughan of the 'usual' purple form near Hook. In v.c.12 this form is quite a rarity, outnumbered by the attractive yellow *forma monochroa*.



*Orobanche hederæ*  
(Ivy Broomrape)

**v.cc.15, 16, [East & West Kent](#) Geoffrey Kitchener & Sue Buckingham**

This report covers Kent as a whole, both East and West, vice counties 15 and 16. As at 1 January 2023, a total of 29,844 records for 2022 was added to the BSBI database; 85% were entered via the vice county recorder(s), the remainder are subject to validation. Recording activities were undertaken through the Kent Botanical Recording Group (KBRG) who held ten programmed field meetings, reported in a newsletter issued November 2022. An account of the status of the Kent Flora and developments over the last ten years was provided to the Kent Nature Partnership and published in July 2022 in Kent's [State of Nature report](#).

The year was notable for the completion in December of the draft rare plant register (RPR), which has taken 11 years, comprising 1,241 pages of accounts for 334 plants. The RPR's annual update was completed in Spring 2022 and provided to BSBI for the Kent webpage, but it was not taken on board and only the previous, February 2021, version has been available for public viewing. KBRG

members have been consulted on the next phase of the RPR: its conversion from draft to final, and the prospective impact of Atlas 2020. Recording of RPR plants remained a priority through 2022, with 1,536 records made. Special surveys and reports were undertaken for Kent Biodiversity Strategy species, which included recording 3,529 spikes of *Orchis purpurea* (**Lady Orchid**) across 26 sites.

*Himantoglossum hircinum* (**Lizard Orchid**) was counted as over 3,000 spikes at Betteshanger Country Park, amounting to the second largest population in the British Isles, although at the same time the developer-owner sought to develop over the colony, digging up and moving the orchids. The scheme has its supporters, but there has been widespread opposition.

Following designation of the Swanscombe peninsula (threatened by



*Carex x elytroides*



*Convolvulus arvensis* L. var. *stonestreetii*



development) in 2021 as an SSSI, further surveys have shown even greater botanical riches, e.g. *Alopecurus aequalis* (**Orange Foxtail**); *Geranium purpureum* (**Little-Robin**); *Pyrola rotundifolia* (**Round-leaved Wintergreen**) in tens of thousands; *Rumex palustris* (**Marsh Dock**) with its hybrids; *Rumex x heteranthos* and *Rumex x wirtgenii*.



*Orobanche caryophyllacea*

- *Carex x elytroides* (*Carex acuta* x *nigra*) has been found for the first time in East Kent, at Dungeness, in the absence of *C. acuta* (**Slender Tufted-sedge**).
- *Convolvulus arvensis* var. *stonestreetii*, a **Field Bindweed** with narrow strap-like corolla-lobes, was recorded for the first time in Kent, at Oare Marshes
- Some 60 spikes of *Orobanche caryophyllacea* (**Bedstraw Broomrape**) were discovered inland



*Persea americana*



near Canterbury, perhaps the third largest population nationally.

- A first county record in the wild for *Persea americana* (**Avocado**) was reported, in remote East Kent woodland.

- At least two of our Kent sites for *Ranunculus tripartitus* apparently hold *Ranunculus* x *novae-forestae* (**New Forest Crowfoot**), identified in 2022, so re-evaluation is needed for all sites.



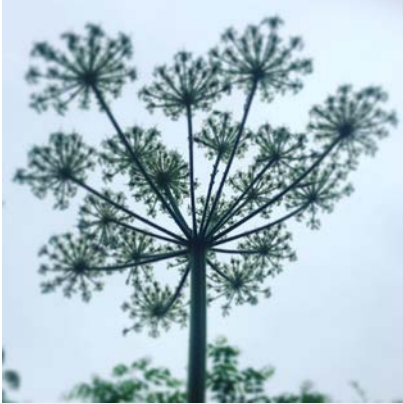
*Ranunculus x novae-forestae*

**v.c.20, [Hertfordshire](#) Ian Denholm, Alla Mashanova and Astrid Biddle**

Normal service resumed in 2023 with a full programme of field meetings led by one or more of the county's VCRs. The sites were chosen to combine floristic diversity with opportunities for improving identification skills. Additionally, we organized a one-day grass identification workshop at the University of Hertfordshire's field campus at Bayfordbury, attended by members of the local Flora Group, newer employees of the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT), and Local Wildlife Site recording volunteers. Following the sad death of Gordon Hanson at the end of 2022, we coordinated the transfer of his personal, very extensive herbarium to the Bayfordbury campus, pending

detailed scrutiny and potential permanent storage at other locations. Gordon was one of Hertfordshire's most accomplished botanists who pioneered studies of alien plants originating from birdseed and other sources (see obituary in BSBI News 151, pp. 76-78).

As well as dividing up the 'core' workload, the three-



*Heracleum mantegazzianum*  
(**Giant Hogweed**), Bloxham,  
Oxfordshire (Emma Fraser)

way joint VCR-ship in Herts helps to expand the reach and visibility of BSBI, and of botany in general, throughout the county. Thus, Alla Mashanova as a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Herts leads the teaching of skills in plant identification and ecology to students and staff, as well as acting as a tutor for Identiplant. Astrid Biddle is employed as an

ecologist at HMWT and leads the botanical surveying of Local Wildlife Sites, generating data invaluable for informing site management plans that also feed back to the BSBI Distribution database. Astrid also leads on the verification of plant records submitted through the iRecord portal.

### v.c.22, Berkshire Mick Crawley

The big news from 2022 was undoubtedly the discovery near Didcot (SU58) in early April of *Himantoglossum robertianum* (**Giant Orchid**), new to Great Britain. When the discovery was reported in The Guardian on 1 April many readers took it to be an April Fool's joke. Richard Bateman thinks the site might be the same as a rumoured deliberate introduction from 15 years ago. He writes "Its official distribution doesn't extend north beyond Aix and Geneva.

Nonetheless, during the last decade it has turned up repeatedly in Belgium and the Netherlands, where it most likely escaped (or was released) from the burgeoning number of private collections and semi-commercial nurseries. A pity, because it's an ecological generalist and the kind of species that could happily spread northward through its own aegis under encouragement from global warming. I guess we'll never know".

**v.c.27, East Norfolk**

**Bob Ellis**

2022 was the first full season of recording for the Norfolk



*Plantago lanceolata* (**Ribwort Plantain**), Swaffham  
(Jennifer Jones)

Flora Group since the onset of Covid. Unfortunately the long period of summer drought meant that many meetings were not as productive as might have been expected. Of the 15 meetings in v.c.27 (one was cancelled), some

were held to fill gaps in the systematic survey of the county (otherwise NFG systematic surveys concentrated on v.c.28). Two workshops were held on *Taraxacum* (**Dandelion**) identification; two meetings focused on *Anacamptis morio* (**Green-winged Orchid**) and *Genista tinctoria* (**Dyer's Greenweed**), where we recorded associate species in quadrats at many of their sites; one meeting recorded county wildlife site woodlands and three were held on private estates. A *Cotoneaster* workshop was held towards the end of the season.

We continue to survey county wildlife sites both as individuals and as a group, in conjunction with Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

Over 6,000 records have been collated for 2022 so far, with at least 2,000 more awaiting data entry. After we

finish systematic recording in 2024, an update to the Norfolk Flora is planned hopefully for 2025 or 2026. We will of course continue recording after 2024 but only particularly interesting finds in the following year will be included in the 'snapshot' for the Flora update.

Perhaps the most interesting find in 2022 was *Orchis anthropophora* (**Man Orchid**); three spikes were discovered in May near the western edge of Norwich. This is the first record for v.c.27 since 1950, when it was last seen in a chalk pit near Holt and where it had been known since 1928. Let's hope it persists as long here.

### v.c.29, [Cambridgeshire](#) Jonathan Shanklin

A lot of recording took place, particularly in the area around Cambridge, with 920 species recorded during the year in TL45. Across the county over 29,000 records were logged in MapMate, with a few additional records of species not in MapMate having to be logged directly to the DDb, which gives a total of 29,349. The usual annual updates of the RPR and Register of Plants of Conservation Concern (RPCC) were made at the beginning of



*Cerastium semidecandrum*  
(**Little Mouse-ear**)  
(Peter Leonard)

the year, informed by these records. A few months later it was discovered that the RPCC meets the updated guidance for an RPR, so the two documents were merged, with the [RPCC](#) being the published document.

I made a thorough survey at Stanmoor Hall farm which includes the Thriplow Peat Holes SSSI and the Whittlesford – Thriplow Hummocky Fields SSSI. One surprise was finding *Cladium mariscus* (**Great Fen-sedge**) in a newly created pond outside the SSSIs, where it was

thought to have come out of the seed bank. Some visits were also made to Chippenham Fen NNR, though further visits will be required to complete the updating of records from this site. In addition the [Cambridge Natural History Society](#) (CNHS) covered the Cambridge Backs, which required additional visits on my part to cover five colleges and six churchyards. A surprise on the Backs was *Astragalus glycyphyllos* (**Wild Liquorice**), which appeared in an area that was left for biodiversity improvements rather than being mown weekly.

Alan Leslie (Emeritus Recorder) compiled a report on the more interesting finds for the local journal [Nature in Cambridgeshire](#), with a summary in the [2023 county newsletter](#).



*Himantoglossum hircinum*

He highlights the many new locations found for *Himantoglossum hircinum* (**Lizard Orchid**) during the year, which could be dropped from the RPCC if another location is found in 2023. He also noted the re-finding in Knapwell Wood of *Hordelymus europaeus* (**Wood Barley**) which had not been seen in the county since 1982. In addition Alan has continued

finding many unusual aliens, particularly in coir peat, and hybrids. One plant new to the county, *Epilobium brachycarpum* (**Panicled Willowherb**), came to him, appearing in his back yard.

A full programme of approximately monthly Cambridgeshire Flora Group meetings took place from

March to October. In addition, the CNHS field meetings invariably included botanical recording. The [2022 county newsletter](#) circulated news, meeting reports and excursion plans to the local botanical community. A [county web page](#) was maintained, and emails were sent to local botanists in advance of meetings. I took part in two County Wildlife Sites panel meetings as the botanical expert and accompanied the local Wildlife Trust's Conservation Officer on some site visits. I provided records in response to inquiries; these vary from wanting to know where to find a particular plant, to species lists for sites or areas.

**v.c.30, [Bedfordshire](#) John Wakely**

2022 was an interesting but not sensational year for botany in Beds. We have a Flora group of some 60 members with about a quarter of these being regular recorders. Living some 20 miles outside the county my botanising in v.c.30 is somewhat limited. The majority of records are now received online via iRecord, iNaturalist and Adnoto (through the Beds Natural History Society).



*Drosera rotundifolia*  
**(Round-leaved Sundew),**  
Snelsmore  
Common, Newbury  
(Adrian Wallington)

Our field trips were again disrupted by Covid, but we did manage a total of 6, including a session on aquatic plant id which was particularly well attended. Floral surveys were undertaken by the group on behalf of English Heritage and a local golf club.

After several years of debate, a Flora Guardian Scheme in which individuals take responsibility for recording and monitoring populations of rare plants, similar to those in operation in nearby counties, has got off the ground and been well supported. To date 22 species at 41



sites are being monitored by 12 guardians with more help promised. An active committee has obtained funding with a view to ensuring the future of the project. Other specialist natural history groups are looking to come on board.

**v.c.32, [Northamptonshire](#)  
Brian Laney**

**Alyson Freeman and**

The Northants Flora Group met 4 times during 2022, visiting Badby, Brigstock, Glapthorn and Finedon. We were very happy to welcome several new members to the group. We concentrated on monads with very few records. Brian Laney also hosted a national BSBI meeting at Daventry.

Difficulties with Mapmate meant that only 6081 records have arrived at the DDb for 2022, but there are more to come from recorders who like to go out alone.



*Himantoglossum hircinum*

The Rare Plant Register is now in draft form and is available on our thriving Facebook group, Northamptonshire and Peterborough Botany.

My favourite find in 2023 was the lone *Himantoglossum hircinum* (**Lizard Orchid**), popping up in a new site for v.c.32 - right by a public footpath!

**v.c.33, [East Gloucestershire](#)  
Chris Dixon**

Across the year, 26,135 records were collected from 382 monads in v.c.33, with up to 193 species in a single monad; 245 monads provided at least 40 species, representing one-seventh of the total area. The main contributors were Chris Dixon, John Rees and Clare and Mark Kitchen. The focus was on recording in previously under-recorded areas of the

vice-county, especially the farmland in the east, rather than the more species-rich escarpment in the west.



*Pedicularis sylvatica*

A personal highlight was the discovery in early July of a small patch of acidic grassland, with *Pedicularis sylvatica* (**Lousewort**), *Carex leporina* (**Oval Sedge**), *Danthonia decumbens* (**Heath-grass**) and *Potentilla erecta* (**Tormentil**), on the north-facing slopes above Hailes.

This type of habitat is exceedingly rare in the Cotswolds, and all but one of these species are included in the local Rare Plant Register, which is awaiting publication.

### Interesting Finds

- *Platanthera chlorantha* (**Greater Butterfly-orchid**). SO9511. C.J. Dixon. 4/6/2022. New tetrad.
- *Galium parisiense* (**Wall Bedstraw**). SO9134. M.A.R. & C. Kitchen. 8/6/2022. A new site, only the fifth for v.c.33.
- *Daphne mezereum* (**Mezereon**). SO9010. M.A.R. & C. Kitchen. 11/6/2022. This record



*Platanthera chlorantha*

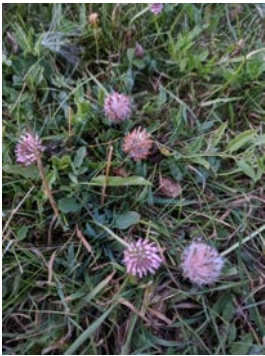
extends the known population of mezereon in the ancient beechwoods at Sheepscombe into a new monad, only the fifth v.c.33 monad it has been recorded in since the year 2000.

- *Hypopitys monotropa* (**Yellow Bird's-nest**). SP1524. C.J. Dixon. 5/7/2022. A new population, and the first hectad record for 25 years.
- *Samolus valerandi* (**Brookweed**). SO8932. M.A.R. & C. Kitchen. 21/7/2022. A new site, and first hectad record since 1982. Only the 15th monad in v.c.33.

**v.c.34, [West Gloucestershire](#) Olga Krylova and Rupert Higgins**

2022 was a very sad year for v.c.34. With deepest regret, we shared the news of the sudden death of v.c.34 recorder Dr Clive M Lovatt, which occurred during exploration of the Forest of Dean bog habitats. The sadness has been carried throughout the whole season.

As a neighbour of Clive and a fellow botanist I have jointly taken on the VCR role to carry on Clive's legacy with the support of Rupert Higgins. A big thank you to ex-v.c.34&33 VCRs and leaders of the Plant Group of the Gloucestershire Naturalists Society, Clare and Mark Kitchen for their support and mentoring. My university degrees, consultancy experience and work as a conservation officer, assessing habitat quality to protect them enable me to settle into the role.



*Trifolium fragiferum*

All 14 field meetings were held by Plant Group of the Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society this year led by Clare and Mark Kitchen including visits previously planned by Clive. I had a taster of the VCR role when leading a 'Pop-up botany' meeting. Alongside the day-to-day VCR role, multiple site visits and botanical surveys have been undertaken with the Stroud Wildlife Survey Group to inform various management plans. This includes:

- River Frome floodplain near Whitminster (SO7607) for Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust;
- Frome Banks (SO8404) for the Stroud Valley Project, including monitoring the 4 highlights of this small woodland - *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* (**Black Spleenwort**)(new record); *Cephalanthera damasonium* (**White Helleborine**); *Aconitum napellus* (**Monk's-hood**); *Bistorta officinalis* (**Common Bistort**).

### Interesting Finds

- A few patches of *Trifolium fragiferum* (**Strawberry Clover**) were discovered in v.cc.33&34 within the River Frome floodplain near Whitminster (SO7607) during 'Pop-up botany' meeting and botanical surveys for Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.
- *Anthriscus caucalis* (**Bur Chervil**) was identified in arable field near Rodmarton (SO9400) while collecting records in the area.



*Anthriscus caucalis*

### v.c.36, [Herefordshire](#) Stuart Hedley

The total number of records made in 2022 was 2500 (directly mine = 1900, others via my entry on I-Record = 600). Also verification of 7400 others' vascular plant I-Records for the County

Projects and Fieldwork:

1. NVC-type vegetation sampling and mapping in dozens of sites to inform context for future county flora, for which the cumulative preparation of species accounts is gradually taking place;

2. about ten training sessions undertaken in plant ID for wide range of skill levels and ages;

3. detailed mapping of England Vulnerable *Viola canina* (**Heath Dog-violet**) population with the local community.

Initiatives included supporting development of a v.c.36 recording team through a local square-bashing initiative (BOB), became trustee of established local meadows group, took a strong steer in the overhaul of a local LWS system, much progress in [ID website for local recorders](#).

Considerable ongoing work on a modern vice-county census catalogue has entailed

critical analysis of the DDb for first time by a locally-based botanist (suggesting so far 1313 discrete native taxa, 178 archaeophytes and 671 neophytes, and 39 taxa completely 'removed' as the records considered erroneous.)

### Interesting Finds

- *Carex vulpina* (**True Fox-sedge**) new to v.c.36, westernmost site in Britain. Found by Hilary Wallace. The image shows it at left with the more common *C. otrubae* (**False Fox-sedge**) at right.



*Carex vulpina*  
(Stuart Hedley)

**v.c.38, [Warwickshire](#) John Walton**

In 2022 we held 13 field meetings that were well attended, and organized a group New Year Plant Hunt around Stratford-upon-Avon with twenty-two participants. We found more than 50 species in flower. Working with the Wildlife Trust we were able to access the large Packington Estate which had not been surveyed for twenty years or more. Our priority in 2022 was to revisit the richer sites for rarities rather than just general recording as we still have a large backlog of records waiting to go on the DDb and we are keenly awaiting the new proposed app.

**Notable finds**

- *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (**Four-leaved Allseed**) Alex Mills found a few plants growing in pavement cracks in the centre of Stratford-upon-Avon. It was new to the county.



*Trifolium ornithopodioides* (**Bird's-foot Clover**) was found at the BSBI Cambridge meeting in 2023 (Jo Wright)

- *Trifolium ornithopodioides* (**Bird's-foot**

**Clover**) Brian Laney found some rosettes outside the Butterfly Farm in Stratford-upon-Avon while searching for plants in the dark using a head torch! A later visit in the daytime confirmed his initial find.

**v.c.39, [Staffordshire](#) John Hawksford**

7105 new monad records for the current decade were made. They were entered into MapMate and, hence, the BSBI Distribution database. This is a substantial reduction



as compared to previous years, which is explained by the premature death of one of the VCRs and the increasing frailty and severe transport problems experienced by the other one. However the number of individuals supplying field data was almost unchanged at 27.

Details of the most significant records are given in The Annual Plant Report, posted on the Staffordshire page of the BSBI website. The account of v.c.39 Charophytes has been completely revised and can be seen on the website.

Plant identification and other queries received in e-



*Umbilicus rupestris*  
(Navelwort), Shropshire  
(Sarah Freeman)

mails and the post have all been answered promptly and in detail. 38 BSBI members reside in Staffordshire. 13 are in regular contact with the VCR. Emails were sent to others reiterating the willingness to offer any help or advice with plant recording. Ten positive replies were received and monad lists and maps of relevant localities were supplied.

Comparisons and collaboration has been undertaken with the work of

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Survey Teams.

### **v.c.40, [Shropshire Mags Cousins](#) and John Martin**

I am happy to report that John and I have survived our first year as the new joint County Recorders for v.c.40, Shropshire, having taken over from Sarah Whild and Alex Lockton in May 2022. The size of the task was quite intimidating but fortunately we have the support of the outgoing VCRs and help from the [Shropshire Botanical Society](#) with training, leading field meetings, recording and

engaging with Shropshire botanists via its website. One of our joint aims is to focus field meetings this year on re-finding rare plants that haven't been recorded in the county for a while, with a view to updating the Rare Plant Register and getting the refreshed list onto the BSBI DDb.

Marshalling the data has proved to be quite challenging, but an endpoint is in sight which will synchronise the current system we use for data collection and management (iRecord); with the [Shropshire Online Flora](#) which uses the NBN Atlas API to view Shropshire's botanical records; and ultimately mesh with the BSBI DDb for the more experienced users and for use in the next BSBI Atlas project.

We have verified over 12,000 records from well-established local botanists, new recorders and visitors to the county, including the inestimable Jonathan Shanklin and even managed to make a few records of our own, especially John who manages to combine recording birds, invertebrates and plants on a regular basis.

## Notable Finds

- *Centaureum pulchellum* (**Lesser Centaury**) was a new record for Shropshire, found by Brett Westwood on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2022. There were about 30 plants at the sides of a wide forest track in the



*Centaureum pulchellum*

Wyre Forest concentrated in an area about 1 m square. This location was within v.c.40 Shropshire by a few hundred metres. Perhaps seed arrived on the wheels of forestry machinery that had been working

at nearby sites in Worcestershire. It may well persist in the Wyre Forest as the niche is highly suitable being a dry, open, somewhat disturbed, grassy woodland ride. Photo by Brett Westwood, 3rd August, 2022.

- *Carex divulsa* subsp. *divulsa* (**Grey Sedge**) was recorded by both Mark Duffell and Kat Edwards-White in 2022, Mark from Pole's Coppice near Pontesbury not far from where he has recorded it before in 2008 and Kat on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022, from Hills Lane Pitmound, Madeley, SJ70110430 which is a new 10 km



*Carex divulsa* subsp. *divulsa*

square for this sedge. It is a rarity in Shropshire at the edge of its range, although is relatively common in southern England. Photo by Kat Edwards-White, 31st July 2022.

### v.c.53, [South Lincolnshire](#) **Malcolm Pool**

**Sarah Lambert and**

In spring 2022 a list of just over 400 monads with fewer than ten post-2000 records was produced, prioritised by ease of access and habitat diversity. Over the course of the year sixty-two of these were visited, the majority by Malcolm Pool and Richard O'Connor. The data is still being entered, but this is good progress towards a future monad-based flora. Little progress was made on the Rare Plant register, but a draft is planned for 2023.

The South Lincolnshire Flora Group (SLFG) has continued to thrive with 104 members of the Facebook group. Seven SLFG meetings were held in 2022, two of which were held jointly with the Lincolnshire



A South Lincolnshire Flora Group Meeting

Naturalists' Union (LNU). We started the year with an excellent New Year Plant Hunt in Lincoln, recording 66 species.

Other sites visited were:

- Bourne Woods in April, where we found a new population of *Polystichum setiferum* (**Soft Shield-fern**)
- Whisby Nature Park in May
- Dunston Beck in June
- Wilsford in late July, a joint meeting with the LNU helping with a parish Bioblitz
- Grimsthorpe Park in August, a visit delayed by Met Office weather warnings for extreme heat. Despite the very parched conditions we added *Potentilla anglica* (**Trailing Tormentil**) to the site list.
- The Wash at Gedney Drove End, where we were hunting for *Salicornia* spp. (**glassworts**) and found a large population of very magnificent *Salicornia dolichostachya* (**Long-spiked Glasswort**)



*Valerianella eriocarpa*  
(**Hairy-fruited Cornsalad**)

## Notable Finds

- *Buglossoides arvensis* (**Field Gromwell**). A sizable population of this Red List Endangered species was recorded from the grounds of an electricity sub-station in the village of Heighington in April 2022.
- *Rumex x dufftii* (*Rumex obtusifolius* x *Rumex sanguineus*). Found flowering and fruiting on the bank of the River Witham in Lincoln during the BSBI New Year Plant Hunt, this is the second record for this possibly overlooked hybrid in v.c.53 which was present with both parents.



*Rumex x dufftii*

### v.c.55, [Leicestershire](#) Geoffrey Hall

We produced a Newsletter in May with details of records and publications on local botany in recent years to bring local botanists up to date. Steve Woodward & Geoffrey Hall have been filling in gaps in tetrad coverage, and Russell Parry has been surveying Leicester City by monad. To date, 24,938 records have been added to the BSBI's DDb for 2022.

Surveys were done of the Belvoir Estate woodlands, Launde Abbey grounds, Wing Water Treatment Works (for Anglian Water), a potential solar panel site near Barrow on Soar and some LWS's (both for Leicestershire County Council). Steve Woodward completed the v.c.55 churchyard survey (started in 2012). Russell Parry re-surveyed some Leicester streets to investigate changes caused by herbicide.

Russell Parry and Richard Mabbutt organised three recording/training meetings for local botanists. Russell Parry helped run a University of Leicester plant ID course and led some ID sessions for the Charnwood Forest Landscape Project and the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust (LRWT). Several talks were given for local societies promoting botany.



*Samolus valerandi*

We collaborated with a Leicester University project about woodland resilience. Russell Parry helped Friends of the Earth with an anti-herbicide campaign, and continued regular maintenance of, and investigations at the University of Leicester Herbarium. Geoffrey Hall & Steve Woodward served on the LRWT's Conservation Committee, and Geoffrey Hall was appointed a trustee of NatureSpot.

A New Rare Plant Register for 398 locally rare and scarce plants was completed and the full grid reference (restricted distribution) is available. A tetrad only version for general distribution is in preparation and will be published in January; an online version will be available later in the year.

## **Publications**

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### Interesting Finds

- *Lycopodium clavatum* (**Stag's-horn Clubmoss**). A plant was found at Beacon Hill Country Park in March, 2021. This is the first record at this site since 1902: it was last recorded in v.c.55 in 1973 and was believed to be locally extinct.



*Lycopodium clavatum*

- *Samolus valerandi* (**Brookweed**). Two plants was found on the banks of the Grand Union Canal near Crane's Lock in October 2022, following clearance of an overhanging tree. This is only its second extant site.
- *Sorghum halepense* (**Johnson-grass**). This alien grass was discovered at Newstead Avenue, Leicester in August 2022, and is a First County Record.

### v.c.56, [Nottinghamshire](#) Mark Woods

Probably the quietest year for field recording in Notts since 2000, but the Biological Records Centre and several other

regular recorders were still active and to date more than 15,000 records (1050+ species) have been processed and submitted to the database (on 27/12/2022). More will follow in the coming months, but a list of the interesting finds and new records has been compiled.

In my role as the joint VCR for Notts, I have updated and edited the Local Wildlife Sites criteria for habitats in the county, updated the plants criteria and now Chair the committee. I have also contributed to the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping workshops. A collaborative exercise to target conservation effort.



*Betonica officinalis* (**Betony**),  
Alnwick (John Dalrymple)

I have assisted and co-ordinated research for post-graduate students at Nottingham Trent University for the reintroduction and expansion of rare plants in the county. The latest being a study of *Vaccinium myrtillus* (**Bilberry**) as an epiphyte on dead veteran trees at Birklands and Bilhaugh SSSI.

Instead of fieldwork, most of my spare time in 2022 has been spent writing species captions, and checking county records and maps for the pending county flora - approximately half of the species captions are complete.

### Interesting Finds

- *Atriplex x hulmeana* (*A. littoralis* x *prostrata*) A1 Great North Road, Balderfield SK82624859. Rob Johnson. 07/07/2022. Single specimen with both parents. Located on edge of slip road of Great North Road and A1. A few other backcross specimens found with *A. littoralis*. Planned search at a likely location, after reading BSBI paper. NCR.

- *Althaea officinalis* (**Marsh-mallow**) Dunkirk Science Park, SK54603791. David Wood. 03/08/2022. 3 plants on a drain bank on vacant land. 2CR.
- *Carex x pseudoaxillaris* (*C. otrubae x remota*) Huthwaite Track SK4722858989. Rob Johnson. 26/07/2022. Off Mill Lane, Plants growing at edge of Northern side of the track under scrub/hedgerow. Been mown but several flowering spikes. Photos and specimen collected. NCR
- *Chenopodium berlandieri* (**Pitseed Goosefoot**) Newgate Street Car Park, Worksop SK58577361. Coles, G.L.D. 22/08/2022. Growing at the base of a street lamp. Seeds checked and verified. NCR.
- *Chenopodium strictum* (**Striped Goosefoot**) Blidworth Industrial Estate SK594566. Rob Johnson. 01/09/2022. NCR. Carlton Road, Sneinton SK585403. Rob Johnson. 05/09/2022. 2CR. Disturbed soil growing with many other *Chenopodiums*. Two more populations were found in 2022
- *Cynoglossum amabile* (**Chinese Hound's-tongue**) River Leen, Bulwell SK543441. Rob Johnson. 16/09/2022. Likely origin from either a completely wrong seed mix used by Environment Agency following bank works or somebody 'Guerilla Gardening'. Plants over a long stretch of bank. NCR.
- *Erigeron annuus* (**Tall Fleabane**) River Leen, EA Compound, Lenton SK549391. Rob Johnson.



*Capsella bursa-pastoris*  
(**Shepherd's-purse**),  
Oxfordshire  
(Terry Swainbank)

21/09/2022. NCR. At least 2 plants growing on disturbed soil and aggregate.

- *Erysimum linifolium* (a **Wallflower**) River Leen, Bulwell SK543441. Rob Johnson. 16/09/2022. Likely origin from either a completely wrong seed mix used by Environment Agency following bank works or somebody 'Guerilla Gardening'. Plants over a long stretch of bank. 2CR.

- *Hieracium spilophaeum* (**Spotted Hawkweed**) Warsop Vale Colliery SK550682. Rob Johnson & Mark Woods. 25/05/2022. 2CR, probably more common. Growing on compacted railway ballast in ruderal vegetation.

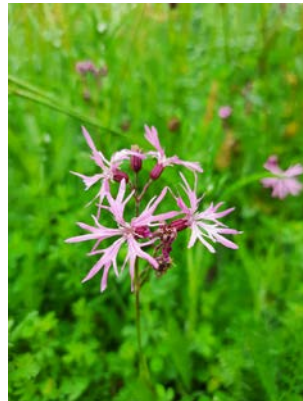


*Cirsium palustre* (**Marsh Thistle**), By the River Eye, Melton Mowbray (Richard Mabbutt)

- *Ipomoea purpurea* (**Common Morning-glory**) River Leen, Bulwell SK543441. Rob Johnson. 16/09/2022. Likely origin from either a completely wrong seed mix used by Environment Agency following bank works or somebody 'Guerilla Gardening'. Plants over a long stretch of bank. NCR.
- *Jacobaea x albescens* (*J. maritima x vulgaris*) Columbia Street, Huthwaite SK469592. Rob Johnson. 29/06/2022 NCR. Growing on cleared land with one of parents. Linby Stream SK534510. Rob Johnson. 23/08/2022. 2CR. In a stone-lined village stream.
- *Lysimachia foemina* (**Blue Pimpernel**) Sookholme Moor SK554678. Rob Johnson and Mark Woods.

25/05/2022. 2nd modern record – species-rich pasture.

- *Medicago sativa* nothosubsp. *varia* (**Sand Lucerne**) Wilford Dismantled Railway SK569371. Rob Johnson. 28/07/2022. 2nd modern record. Large patch by path near tramline. Revisited on 11/10/2022 to check fruit to confirm ID.
- *Rubus phoenicolasius* (**Japanese Wineberry**) Red Lane, Lowdham (West side) SK6646. John Osborne. 19/07/2021. 2CR, possibly planted, but naturalised on shaded verge.
- *Taraxacum alatum* Southwell SK704543. Rob Johnson. 4/8/2022. One plant on a driveway. NCR. Southwell SK707540. Rob Johnson. 5/12/2022. In a private garden. 2CR.
- *Trifolium alexandrinum* (**Egyptian Clover**) River Maun, Mansfield SK569639. Dave Wood. 25/06/2022 Sown game crop (part of seed mix or contaminant?) – cereal crop margin, locally frequent 2CR.
- *Veronica x andersonii* (*V. salicifolia* x *speciosa*) Eakring Brail Wood SK664608. Rob Johnson. 20/04/2022. Planted in an ancient woodland. NCR. Lammas Road, Sutton-in-Ashfield. SK492590. Rob Johnson. 13/05/2022. 2CR.
- *Verbascum pyramidatum* (**Caucasian Mullein**) Barnstone Soil Heap SK737347. Gareth Hiron. 11/09/2022. NCR.
- *Galium x pomeranicum* (*G. verum* x *album*) Langar Fields Hedgerow SK736342. Gareth Hiron.



*Silene flos-cuculi*  
(**Ragged-Robin**), Rugby  
(Jade Lake)

03/07/2022. Intermediate characteristics- flowers light yellow cream, leaves wider than *G.verum* but narrower than *G.album*. Small amount in grassy pathside. Both parents occur here, in some abundance. 2CR.

- *Scabiosa ochroleuca* (**Pale Yellow Scabious**) A453 Trunk Road, Clifton SK55053512. Rob Johnson. 14/09/2022. NCR. Growing on a wide grassy verge. Likely naturalised/seeded from plants on Nottingham Trent Clifton Campus.
- *Spiraea nipponica* (**Japanese Bridewort**) Bramcote Hills SK522384. Rob Johnson. 27/09/2022. NCR. Single bush on edge of site.

v.c.57, [Derbyshire](#) Alan Willmot



*Ranunculus parviflorus*

As the Derbyshire Flora Group, I organised a series of 8 outdoor day meetings in the county to record plants and improve the botanical knowledge of the participants. Individual members of the group also recorded plants such that by the end of the year we

had between us submitted some 20,000 records for the county. These were virtually all at the monad level or better. These records involved around 1020 types of plant which included 27 taxa new to the county. One of these is potentially new to Britain; this is *Aizoanthemopsis hispanica* (**Aizoon**), which was found growing in the pot of an Olive tree imported from Spain in Hudson's Plant Centre, Duffield (SK3244). This, and other Olive pots, in the Centre proved a particularly fruitful hunting ground for records of unusual species. Ultimately 12 were found including other new county records such as *Parietaria officinalis* (**Eastern**



**Pellitory-of-the-wall**) and *Parapholis incurva* (**Curved Hard-grass**). The remaining new county records were mainly casuals and garden escapes although there were a few which could possibly be counted as native, such as *Rorippa islandica* (**Northern Yellow-cress**) and *Taraxacum inopinatum*. The 20,000 records also included a number of significant refinds. The most notable of these



*Viola tricolor* subsp. *curtisii* (**Seaside Pansy**),  
Braunton Burrows  
(Mary Breeds)

were *Ranunculus parviflorus* (**Small-flowered Buttercup**) not recorded locally since about 1950 and *Trifolium ornithopodioides* (**Bird's-foot Clover**) not recorded since about 1850. These were both found on a newly constructed roadway of permeable pavers on the flood-relief dam at The Avenue Country Park, Clay Cross (SK3868). They were probably

imported with sandy material used to bed the pavers down on the dam wall.

### **v.c.59, [South Lancashire](#) David Earl**

Thus far for 2022 there are 14,500+ on Mapmate or awaiting importation and a further 16,000+ on iRecord bringing the total known number of records for 2022 to over 30,500. There are additional records on iNaturalist which await verification.

The iNaturalist City Nature Challenge took place from 29th of April to 2nd of May and produced around 1500+ records for Greater Manchester, 2,900+ Lancashire and an amazing 4,800+ for Merseyside. Excursions included an exploration of Croxteth Park, Liverpool with the Liverpool Botanical Society.

The main administrations activities were verifying vascular plant records on iRecord and to a lesser extent on

iNaturalist and over the autumn months that of editing of vague date class records held on Mapmate.

Limited progress has been made capturing iNaturalist and iRecord and Local Record Centres for the forthcoming Flora of South Lancashire during 2022 but this should be stepped up during 2023.

### Interesting Finds

- *Poa infirma* was discovered at Charnock Richard Services SD5415 by P Stanley, a new record for the vice-county.

- *Selaginella kraussiana* (**Krauss's Clubmoss**) was found at Ince Blundell SD3203 by D Callender and it remains to be seen if the plants will have survived the frosts of 2022/23.

- A further population of *Ranunculus auricomus* (**Goldilock Buttercup**) was found by S Cross on the Liverpool Botanical excursion to Croxteth Park.

- A tree considered to be *Aesculus flava* (**Yellow Buckeye**) was found on the Liverpool Botanical excursion to Croxteth Park with the earliest record traced for the vicecounty being from Calderstones Park, Liverpool by SJ McWilliam in 2015.



*Poa infirma*

### v.c.60, [West Lancashire](#) David Earl

It is estimated that over 6,500 records have now been received with the total rising to over 9,000 once verified

records from iRecord are downloaded. The main areas of recording activity have been around Preston, the western section of the Fylde peninsula, Morecambe, Lancaster and Silverdale with more limited recording taking place in the rural areas. The iNaturalist City Nature Challenge took place from 29th of April to 2nd of May and produced around 2,900+ records in Lancashire, a significant proportion of which will be from within v.c.60.



*Poa infirma*

One of the main activities over the autumn months was the editing of vague date class records held on Mapmate with this activity being extended to records for v.c.64 within the boundaries of modern-day Lancashire.

Our Emeritus Recorder Eric Greenwood sadly passed away after a short illness in the autumn of 2022.

Eric's long standing and distinguished contribution to v.c.60 essentially began in 1964 with much field work be carried out by the recording team to c.2002 resulting in the publication of the Flora of North Lancashire in 2012. Eric was also an active BSBI council member. Several tributes were made at a recent celebration Eric's life including those from Barbara Greenwood, David Earl and Mary Dean. Eric's obituary for submission to the BSBI is currently being compiled.



*Galanthus plicatus*

## Interesting Finds

- *Poa infirma* (**Early Meadow-grass**) was discovered at Forton Services (SD5051) by P Stanley, NCR.
- *Galanthus plicatus* (**Pleated Snowdrop**) was found in turf under trees by Morecambe Library (SD4364).
- *Phygelius capensis* (**Cape Figwort**) was found at Shirehead Fold (SD5051).
- *Crocus sieberi* (**Sieber's Crocus**) may be the identity of plants seen at Caton (SD5364).
- *Persicaria capitata* (**Pink-headed Persicaria**) is increasing with plants having been found at the base of walls at Torrisholme (SD4563) and as a persistent garden weed in Silverdale (SD4675) the later by R Spooner.
- *Macleaya cordata* (**Five-seeded Plume-poppy**) was found at the side of path at Silverdale (SD4575) being found by R Spooner.
- *Symphytum* 'Hidcote Pink' was found in two locations at Abbeystead (SD5654) by D.P. Earl & S Richardson.



*Persicaria capitata*



*Symphytum* 'Hidcote Pink'

**v.c.62, [North-east Yorkshire](#) Dave Barlow**

There have been a few notable finds in v.c.62 this year. A visit to a site in the south of the county proved that the plant *Herniaria ciliolata* (**Fringed Rupturewort**) first recorded in 2015 was still surviving in the the original site. Also found there was *Lotus tenuis* (**Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil**) a rare plant in the north.

Other notable finds include *Epipactis phyllanthes* (**Green-flowered Helleborine**) a new county

record found by a local birder who has got into plants during the lockdowns. In the south of the county there was another new site for *Gentiana pneumonanthe* (**Marsh Gentian**) and the finding of *Hypochaeris glabra* (**Smooth Cat's-ear**) not seen since the 1960s. However, the star find was *Trifolium vesiculosum* (**Arrowleaf Clover**), a clover on steroids! A new plant for the U.K.



*Trifolium vesiculosum*

**v.c.63, [South-west Yorkshire](#) Louise Hill & Kay McDowell**

We held five field trips (south of Huddersfield area) including one with Bradford Botany Group and one trip recording under recorded monads on the moorlands in the west of the vice county on the border with Lancashire.

We held a very successful plant identification day in July with River Holme Connections near Huddersfield.

We've had preliminary talks last Spring with Alastair Fitter about his Yorkshire Priority Plants list in regards to recording plants on Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserves.

Just last week I started work on a project with David Campbell, Biodiversity Officer for Bradford Metropolitan District Council (MDC) and Susan Simcock from the Bradford Botany Group. Bradford Council are planning their Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for West Yorkshire and what priorities should be taken forward for the Bradford District. We think it will be a good starting point for a Flora of Bradford.

Other vice counties - I've also been helping identify plants in the York area (v.cc.61, 62 & 64). We found *Mentha pulegium* (**Pennyroyal**) on the York University campus. It was last recorded in the Haxby area of York in 1863!

Also in v.c.64 my plant records helped to buy a 24 acre field in Bardsey, near Wetherby, as well as designate it as a Local Wildlife Site. An adjoining field was also designated using my records, habitat maps etc.

### Interesting Finds

- *Chaenorhinum organifolium* (**Malling Toadflax**) in Huddersfield found by Jill Lucas, who is also updating her 'Flora of Huddersfield'. NCR
- *Vaccinium x intermedium* was re-found by Laurence Sutton at Norland Moor, south-west of Halifax after 32 years.



*Chaenorhinum organifolium*



**v.c.65, North-west Yorkshire Linda Robinson**

The annual monitoring of *Neotinea ustulata* (**Burnt Orchid**) in its three remaining sites in the v.c. took place at the end of May and beginning of June. The Glebe Field had three individual plants recorded, Swinithwaite Pasture only had two individuals but the three SSSI fields belonging to a farm below West Witton had a total of two hundred and sixty four individuals which brought it into favourable condition according to Natural England.

The *Pseudorchis albida* (**Small White Orchid**) was



*Galinsoga parviflora*  
(**Gallant Soldier**),  
Farnham (Andrew Platt)

monitored in June at three of its sites this year, four individuals recorded at Marsett Rigg, two individuals counted at Len Pastures and forty six individuals were counted at Fotheringholme SSSI. Also seen and confirmed thanks to Alan Gendle and his friends were *Dactylorhiza x formosa* (*D. maculata x D.*

*purpurella*) and *Dactylorhiza x venusta* (*D. fuchsii x D. purpurella*), Many thanks to our volunteers.

Records received in 2022 included some from Jo Parmenter who updated and discovered new sites for Teesdale rarities, including a new site for *Osmunda regalis* (**Royal Fern**) and *Potentilla fruticosa* (**Shrubby Cinquefoil**) in Deepdale. Nik Aspey updated records on a visit to Cautley Spout including *Orthilia secunda* (**Serrated Wintergreen**) and *Sedum rosea* (**Roseroot**). *Cotula alpina* (**Alpine Buttonweed**) the small Australian native was discovered in Marfield Wetlands by Trish New, usually found at higher altitudes on grouse moors above Masham. Finally one of the best records came from John O'Reilly whilst surveying on Cronkley Fell, he found two bushes of *Betula nana* (**Dwarf Birch**), a first for the v.c. Amazing when

you think how well the top of Cronkley Fell has been botanised in the past.

**v.c.66, [County Durham](#) Keith Robson**

Around 13,500 records were added to the database in 2022. There were new county records for 9 species, not surprisingly all were established aliens except for a hybrid fern, *Dryopteris filix-mas x borrieri* = *D. x critica*.

The [Upper Teesdale Special Flora Recording and Conservation Project](#) has continued surveying this special area but concentrated mainly over the border in v.c.65 on Cronkley Fell this year.

The DWT Botany group ran over 50 outings during 2022 ranging from winter tree and vegetative sessions at the start of the year to a few fungi and bryophyte ones at the year end. The Facebook group continued to expand and currently has 330 members. Outreach involved leading flora walks for a number of local



*Ophrys apifera* var. *chlorantha*

councils, several wildlife groups, the Alpine Garden Society and the Wildlife Trust as well as a BSBI outdoor field meeting to the Sunderland's limestone hills and the New Year Plant Hunt.

Orchids - The Natural History Society of Northumbria ran a citizen, project 'Discovering North East Orchids', to help map the North East's orchids. A number of sites with no records for many years that were visited still held species. Unfortunately, the *Neotinea ustulata* (**Burnt**

**Orchid**) at its only county site did not appear this year, but it does not appear every year so no real cause for concern. A fine example of *Ophrys apifera* var. *chlorantha* (**Bee Orchid**) was found ably a busy road lay-by. A large colony of over 250 *Epipactis dunensis* (**Dune Helleborine**) was discovered, close to it's original site in the Tyne valley.

The following species were observed to be still present at their only very localised county site in 2022 - *Ranunculus penicillatus* subsp. *penicillatus* (**Stream Water-crowfoot**); *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (**Four-leaved Allseed**); *Epipactis palustris* (**Marsh Helleborine**) and *Cladium mariscus* (**Great Fen-sedge**).

### v.c.67, [South Northumberland](#) Megs Rogers & John Richards

#### Projects and field work

Our slant on the England LORE project is to each year provide a list of rare or under recorded plants to be refound and looked for and a number of new sites have been reported including for *Trollius europaeus* (**Globe Flower**). Habitat recording continued in ancient woodland (this will now link



*Vaccinium uliginosum*

with the ERIC North East Ancient Woodland Inventory Project) and on limestone outcrops where good numbers of plants such *Scabiosa columbaria* (**Small Scabious**) were found despite extensive sheep grazing. Collaboration continues with local organisations and a link made with a new large Encouraging Wildness project on an estate. General recording has started to increase again and together with local botanists over 9000 records have been

made. Interesting finds are published by AJR in the v.c.67 Newsletters which are on the new website.

Chris and Hazel Metherell organized the Citizen Science *Discovering North East Orchids* through the *Natural History of Northumbria* and local botanists helped with visits, recording and species accounts.



*Crocus nudiflorus*

**New initiatives** The first outing for local members took place in September with a visit to the coast and rare lowland heath and further ones will be arranged. James Common has just set up a much needed and excellent website for [Botany in Northumberland](#) and he has also started a new Northumberland Botany Group to encourage younger botanists, beginners and cross-generational learning while out recording.

### Interesting Finds

- *Bistorta vivipara* (**Alpine Bistort**) An exciting new site on gravels beside the South Tyne downstream from a previous location but not seen there for thirty years.
- *Crocus nudiflorus* (**Autumn Crocus**) A surprising find of over a hundred flowers on a field bank. Second county record.



*Linnaea borealis*

- *Vaccinium uliginosum* (Bog Bilberry) Exact location finally recorded! Not seen since 1979 and one of only three known sites.
- *Linnaea borealis* (**Twinflower**) The first flowering for over a decade at our sole remaining site.
- *Gentianella campestris* (**Field Gentian**) Restricted now to a single locality but with more than a hundred plants flowering in four microsites.



*Gentianella campestris*

**v.c.68, [North Northumberland](#) Chris Metherell/James Common**

Perhaps the most important event of the year was the appointment of James Common as joint recorder. Many hands *etc.*!

Rather few records, only about 500 or so. The bulk were accumulated as part of a joint citizen science project with the Natural History Society of Northumberland on orchids, resulting in the publication of “Orchids of the North-East” in December 2022. This project has taken up much resource time during the year (we produced films of almost all the relevant orchids to aid identification for example), however as a result we received records from over 60 recorders, many of whom were new, and hope to build on this recorder base next year.

Planning has taken place with a view to updating the v.c. RPR and a specialised recording group has been formed to assist with undertaking the necessary monitoring for this. BSBI members are welcome to join this and can be added to the mailing list by [emailing James](#).

James has been hard at work producing a new website covering not only v.c.68 but also v.c.67, which is now live and contains lots of information on local recording. Social media accounts encouraging recording in v.cc.68 & 67 are also in the pipeline.

The VCRs have led a substantial number of botanical trips covering varying levels of expertise, including trips with students in collaboration with Newcastle University.

We have maintained contacts with local organisations (notably the Farne Islands Advisory Group and Northumberland Coast Care) and major landowners. In the latter case much time was expended surveying invasive in a sand dune system in the north of the VC, which has, *inter alia*, produced excellent records of several rarer species which are also found in the area to which access is not normally permitted.

**v.cc.69 & 70, [Cumberland](#)  
Brown and Jeremy Roberts**

Our year began with another successful New Year Plant Hunt with 44 people taking part and 80 species being recorded, fewer than last year, probably due to autumn frosts. This was followed by our Snowdrop Hunt during January and February which brought in more than 400 records.

In March we held our Indoor Meeting at Gosling Sike near Carlisle, looking over the previous year and making plans for 2022. This was followed by 9 Field Meetings, spaced out through the spring

**Mike Porter, Phill**



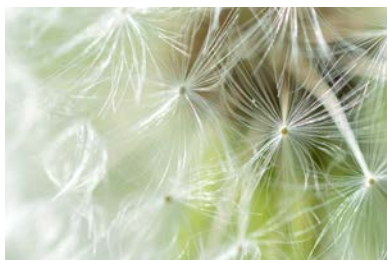
*Phelipanche purpurea*



and summer months in various parts of Cumbria, the last a combined meeting with the British Pteridological Society. During the season we held a National Field Meeting to look at sedges at Tarn Moss and Eycott Hill, made some progress on the updating of the RPR for Cumbria, encouraged interest in the plants of Cumbria through our Facebook site, Cumbria Botany, which now has more than 700 members, produced three Newsletters and processed many records, some of them significant, via iRecord. As a result of field meetings and individual efforts, to date more than 26,000 new records have been entered in the DDb, roughly 11,000 from Cumberland and 15,000 from Westmorland.

Further items of particular interest include: The discovery of a third Cumbrian site for *Phelipanche purpurea* (**Yarrow Broomrape**) at Workington Harbour by Roger Holme.

The finding of vast quantities of *Callitriche palustris* (**Narrow-fruited Water-starwort**) in the extensive muddy drawdown zone at Haweswater Reservoir, still the only confirmed site for the plant in England.



*Taraxacum* agg. (**Dandelion**),  
Rotherham, Yorkshire  
(Dene Wood)

### **v.c.113a, Guernsey**      **Helen Litchfield**

I work closely with the local organisation, La Société Guernesiaise (LSG), in all things botanical. Under the LSG banner, we organise public walks as well as weekly recording sessions.

Guernsey was delighted to host Fred Rumsey in April. Our first foray was to the local headland to check on the presence of our little colony of *Ophioglossum*

*lusitanicum* (**Least-Adder's-tongue**). Fred was able to determine the presence alongside, of *Ophioglossum azoricum* (**Small Adder's-tongue**). A trip to a known area



*Asplenium x sarniense* (*A. adiantum-nigrum x obovatum*)

for our hybrid *Aspleniums* resulted in several plants being identified as *A. x sarniense*. With a small amount of trepidation, bright yellow flags were placed to mark each plant. The site was revisited later in the year by Gareth Coleman. He checked the spores, our understanding of the key identifying features, was enriched. Another huge benefit was engaging with the owner of the hedge bank who was delighted to know that it was home to such rarities and has since taken care with the cutting regime to protect them.

The flags are still present as I type this in January 2023.

As a group, we were pleased to be asked to carry out survey work on behalf of the Government of Guernsey. We were not assigned the project until the very end of June, following a very, very dry spell. The work involved quadrat surveying along the coastal areas, most of which were fried to a crisp. However, undaunted, a small group of us carried out over 500 surveys in a range of habitats. Being paid to pursue our passion certainly helped. The data will be used to inform management practices.

### Interesting Finds

- *Anacamptis morio* (**Green-winged Orchid**) Found at Pleinmont after an absence of many years.

- *Epilobium palustre* (**Marsh Willowherb**) Found at Grande Pre reserve, last record 1968.
- *Festuca arenaria* (**Rush-leaved Fescue**) Determined by John Poland at Grande Havre.
- *Juncus bulbosus* (**Bulbous Rush**) Determined by Fred Rumsey at Les Caches Farm

### v.c.113b, Jersey Anne Haden

Approximately 3000 records were collected during the year, many from our weekly Thursday morning walks and some from our fortnightly walks with the Société Jersiaise Botany Section. We worked with the Government Environment Department on several projects including advising on invasive species, green roofs and protected plants on the island. Notable finds this year were *Tragopogon pratensis* (**Goat's-beard**) which was found growing near a drain in the Covid testing car park and *Mimulus moschatus* (**Musk**) growing in Rozel Manor.

In April Fred Rumsey visited Guernsey and a party of botanists from Jersey flew over to our sister island to enjoy days of exploring new habitats and especially looking at hybrid Aspleniums. In August a party of Jersey botanists joined a gang from Guernsey in Sark for a day's plant hunting on a very hot day. We found *Stachys palustris* (**Marsh**



*Myosotis sicula*  
(**Jersey Forget-me-not**)

**Woundwort**) in a hedgerow, this is rarely seen in Jersey. John Poland visited Jersey in spring and joined in a botany walk and presented a talk on rare plants one evening. It was fortuitous that 13 small plants of *Myosotis sicula* (**Jersey Forget-me-not**) were found while John was in the island,

possible as a result of the clearing of the *Crassula helmsii* (**New Zealand Pigmyweed**) that was undertaken by a gang of Jersey botanists at the site, mentioned in my report last year. This find has galvanized the Environment department to do more clearing this year.

One student completed the Identiplant course and 4 are already signed up for next year, the 3 NPMS squares we have on the island were surveyed again this year. Local botanists helped the Environment Department with surveys on the sand dunes to assess the impact of a herd of Loaghtan sheep grazing in a fenced off area. Once again the New Year Plant Hunt proved very popular with the customary pub lunch half way through the hunt, the balmy 12°C temperature was a bonus.

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## LOst Rarities in England

As you can see from the county reports VCRs and others have been out looking for some of the apparently lost rare (and common) species that were missing from hectads post 2000. Success has been mixed – some plants have clearly been there all along and not reported, some plants were probably



*Roemeria hybrida*  
(**Rough Poppy**), Hampshire  
(Tristan Norton)

only casual occurrences, for some the habitat has been lost and for others the plants have not been found in what still seems to be suitable habitat. Even for the last class a repeat visit at a different time of year or in a year with different meteorological conditions may reveal the plant.



*Neottia nidus-avis* (**Bird's-nest Orchid**), Powerstock, Dorset (Mark Pike)

When I visit new areas I usually check whether there are any species that I should be particularly looking for. A recent visit to a Shropshire SSSI did reveal two LORE species: *Geum rivale* (**Water Avens**) and *Valeriana dioica* (**Marsh Valerian**), but equally I failed to find some sedges

that had been reported more recently. A visit to a Flintshire area of limestone (not in England!) gave refinds of *Neottia ovata* (**Common Twayblade**) and *Gentianella amarella* (**Autumn Gentian**), but failed to find *Geranium columbinum* (**Long-stalked Crane's-bill**), which at least in Cambridgeshire has been having a good year. As a side point, there were recent dots on the DDb hectad map for both the re-found species, however in both cases they were for the adjacent vice-county of Denbighshire.

Sometimes you don't find the LORE species that you are looking for, but find another one instead. I went looking for *Stellaria holostea* (**Greater Stitchwort**) in one hectad [not on the RPCC, but Cambridgeshire is on the edge of the ["hole" in its distribution](#)]. I didn't find it in the reported location, but instead found *Artemisia absinthium* (**Wormwood**), wanted for the hectad, but not expected in that monad.

Another visit was primarily to record a couple of "Shanklins" – monads with no previous records. In one of these I made the surprise find of *Eleogiton fluitans* (**Floating Club-rush**), which hadn't been seen in the area since 1932.

Overall my experience has been that it is very much worthwhile looking for LORE species and exploring un-recorded area. Some are un-recorded because they seem

to have little interesting habitat, but there may be that little corner where something has persisted.

Jonathan Shanklin

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### Some frequent abbreviations:

B&IB	<i>British &amp; Irish Botany</i>
BRC	Biological Records Centre
CEH	Centre for Ecology & Hydrology
DDb	BSBI Distribution Data-base
E&C	BSBI Events & Communications Committee
<i>EBN</i>	<i>English Botanical News</i>
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LC	Least Concern threat level
LRC	Local (Environmental) Records Centre
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local (or County) Wildlife Site
NCR	New County Record
2CR	Second County Record etc.
NPMS	National Plant Monitoring Scheme
QGIS	A freeware geographic information system
RPCC	Register of Plants of Conservation Concern
RPR	Rare Plant Register
S&D	BSBI Science & Data Committee (formerly Records & Recording)
S&T	BSBI Skills & Training Committee (formerly Training & Education)
v.c.	vice-county
VCR	Vice-county Recorder

Date-class BSBI divides plant records into different time periods. Historically these were rather arbitrary, depending on Atlas recording projects. Since 2000 they have been strictly decadal, with the current one starting in 2020.