

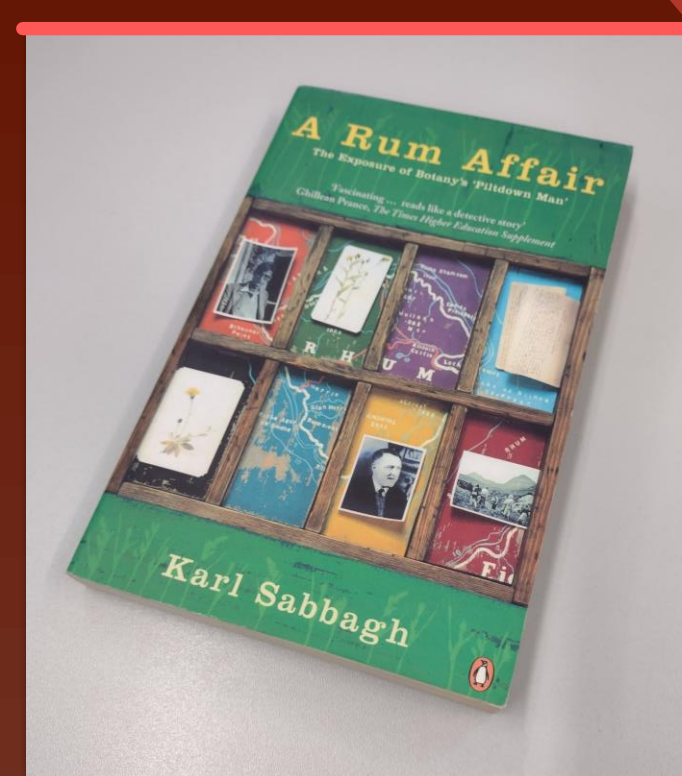
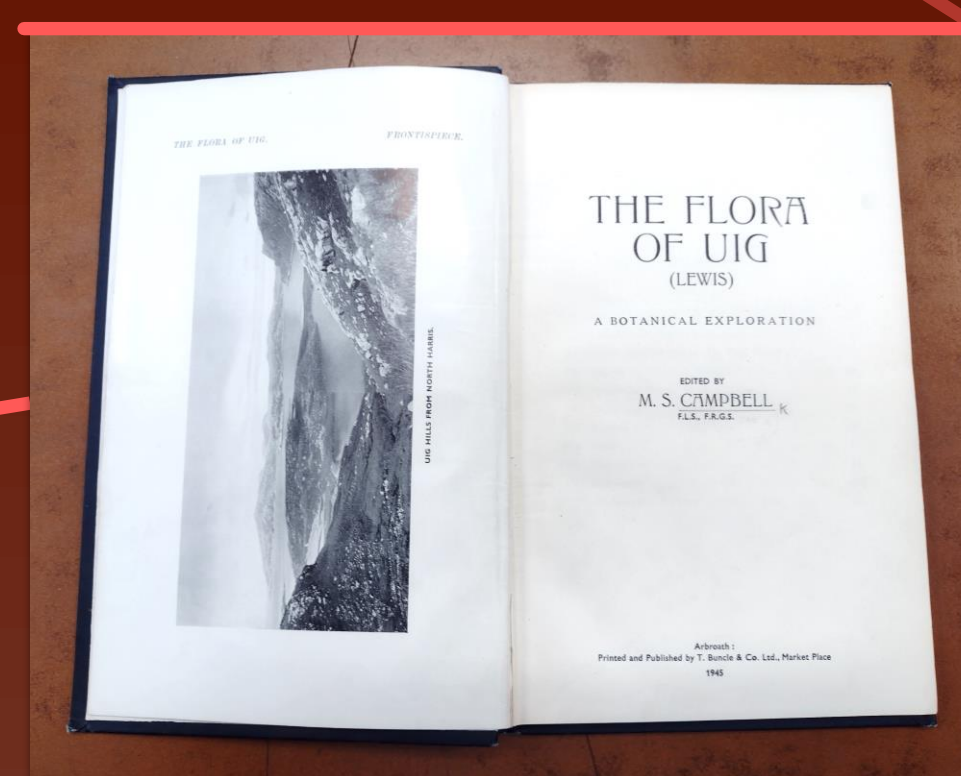
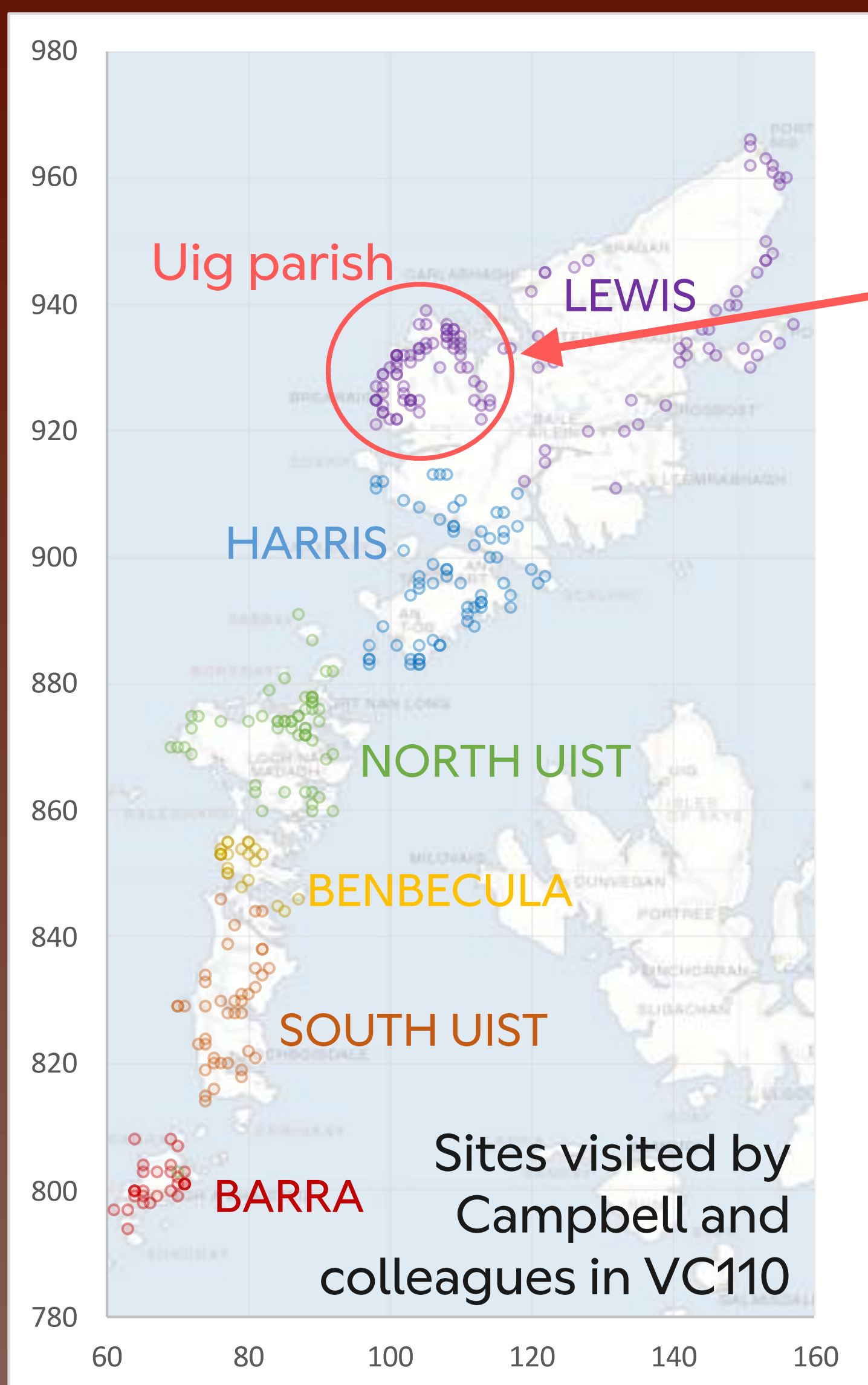
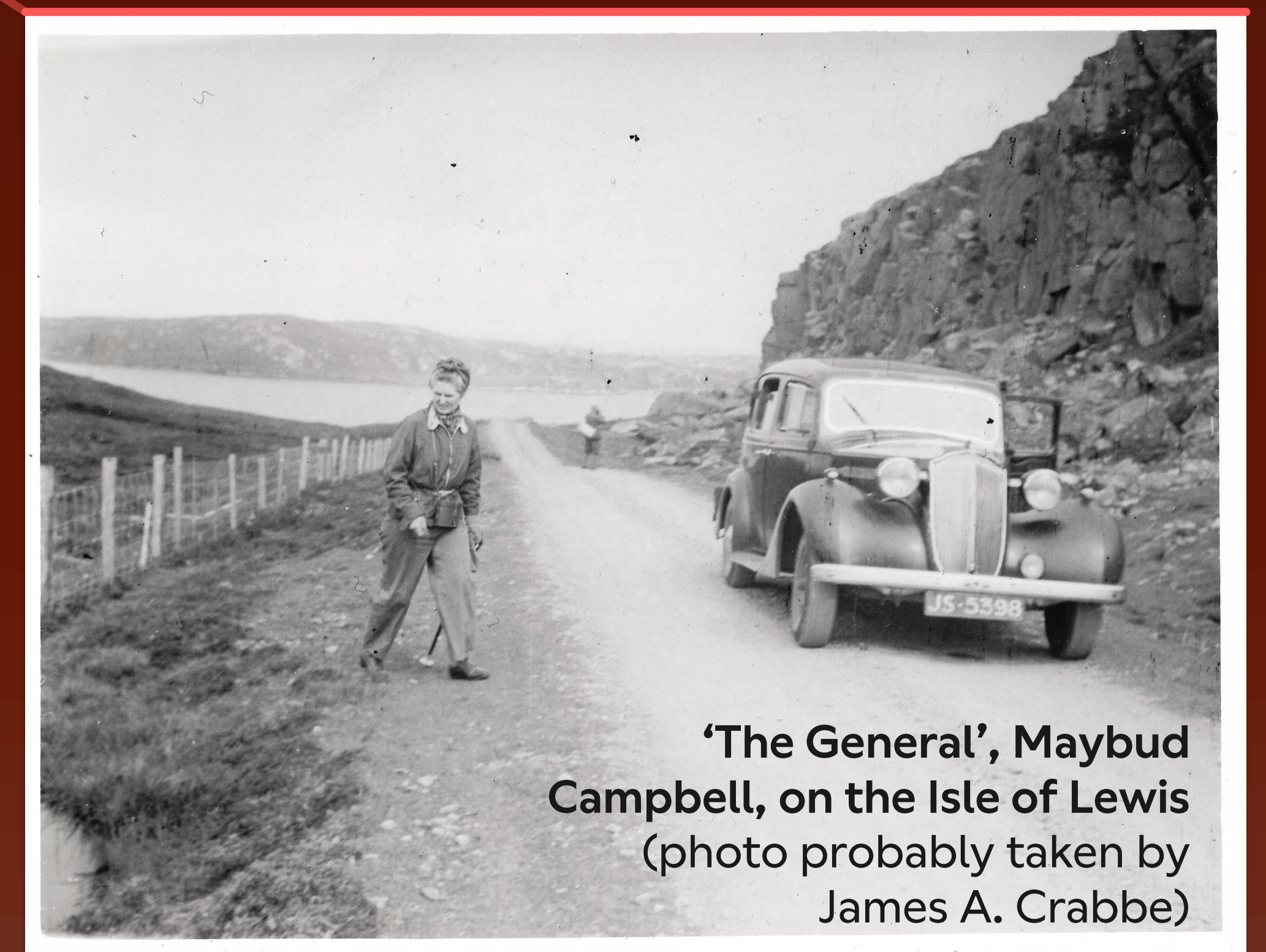
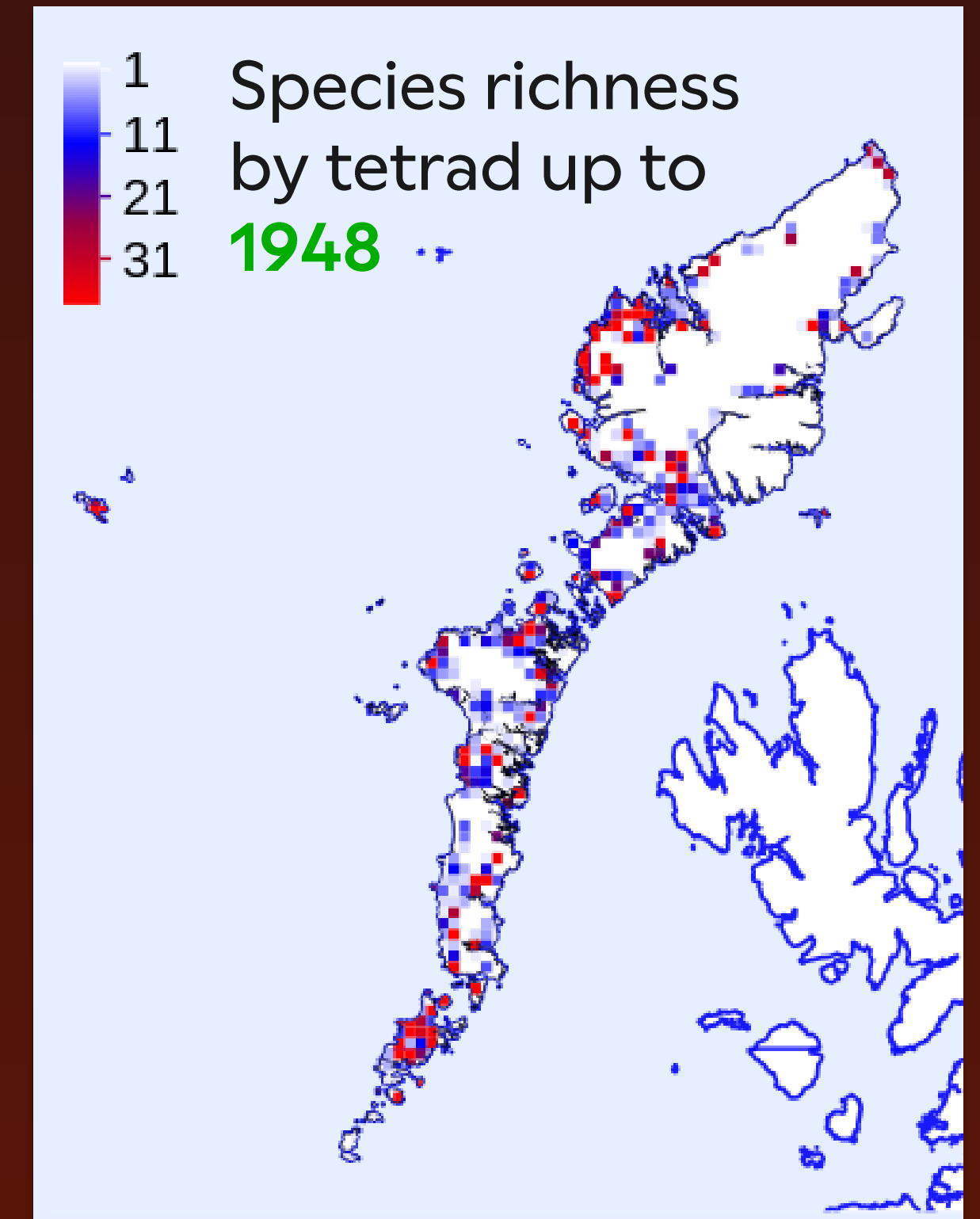
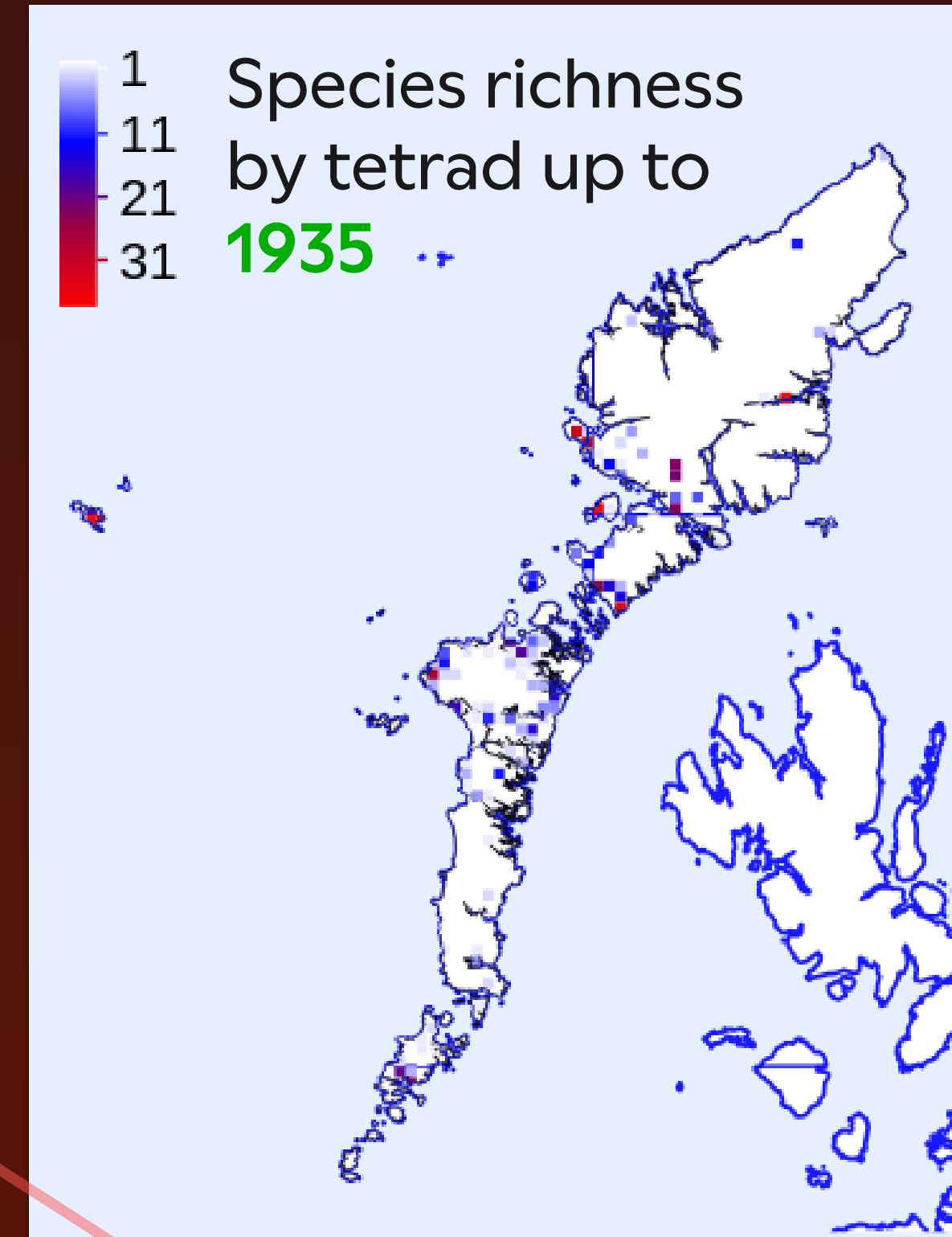
# Maybud Campbell's expeditions to the Outer Hebrides (1936–1948)

Christopher J. Dixon (VC33 recorder & NHM curator)

IN THE 1930s, the flora of the Outer Hebrides was still poorly known...

**ENTER** **Maybud Sherwood Campbell** (1903–1982) – socialite; botanist; amateur opera singer – who conceived and ran annual expeditions to VC110 from 1936 to 1948. She was accompanied by **Alfred James Wilmott** (1888–1950) – botanist and ping-pong player – and others from the British Museum (Natural History), and amassed a huge collection of specimens and data, now held at the Natural History Museum in London.

**BUT** at the same time, **John William Heslop-Harrison** (1881–1967) – chippy, working-class biologist and fraudster – was also surveying the Hebrides, with a monopoly on botanising the island of Rùm (VC104). The two rival groups quickly fell out, probably more due to Campbell's personality than Wilmott's. The diaries of Maybud's team only rarely mention "Prof. Harrison" and "Dr. Clark" (his assistant and son-in-law), but the shadow that Heslop-Harrison cast over the expeditions is clear. Had the two groups co-operated, they could easily have produced a county flora. Instead, Campbell produced only a slim *Flora of Uig*.



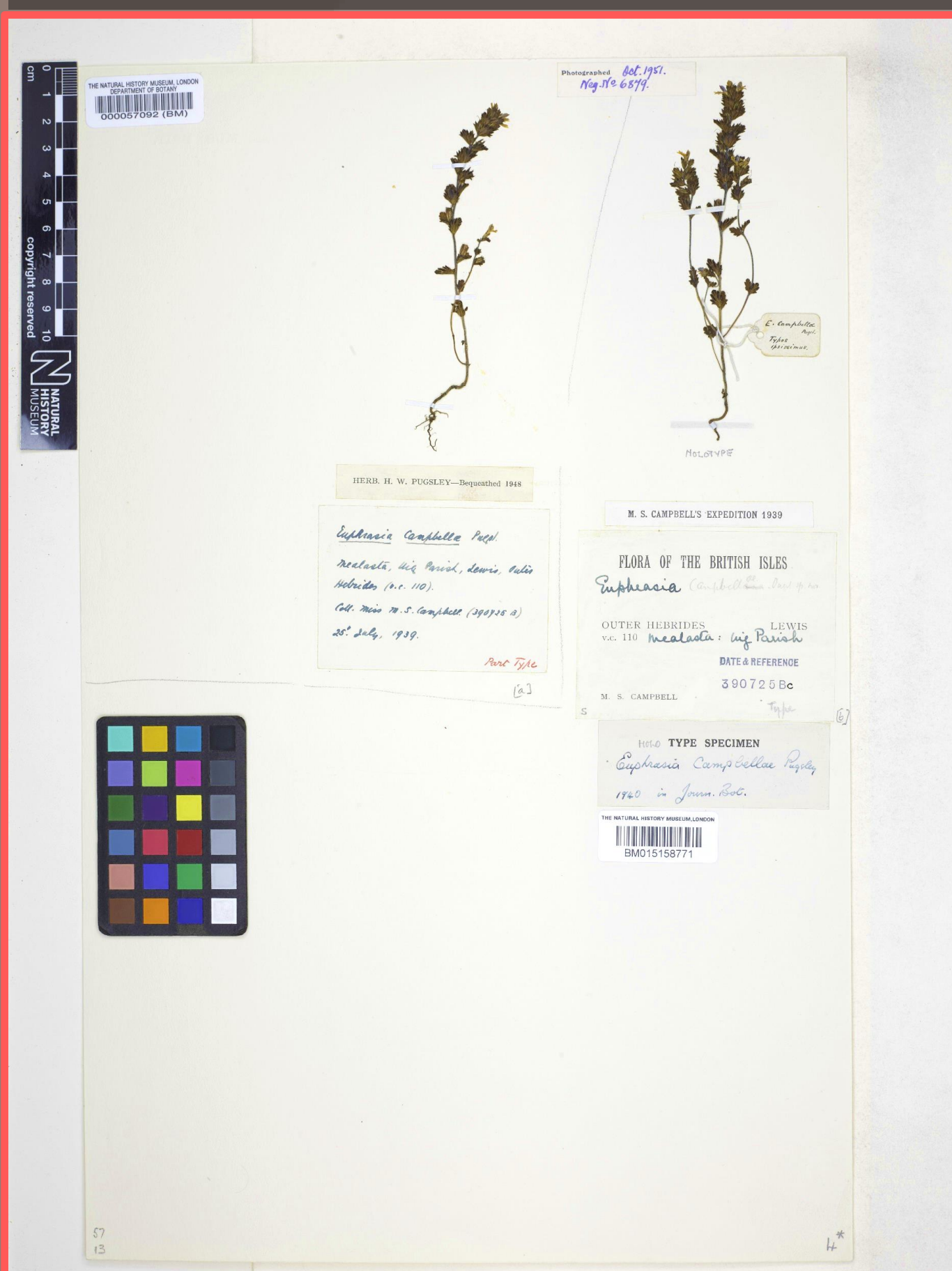
Campbell et al. collected **over 6800** specimens throughout the Outer Hebrides. A single trip to Scalpay, restricted to 105 minutes by the boat's schedule, resulted in over 200 specimens of 142 species. All their specimens from across VC110 have been digitised, geolocated and imaged, and will soon be available as a dataset on the NHM website: [data.nhm.ac.uk](https://data.nhm.ac.uk).

Campbell's expeditions made the first county records of *Eriophorum latifolium*, *Saxifraga tridactylites*, *Medicago lupulina*, *Medicago sativa* and "*Vicia angustifolia*" (= *V. sativa* subsp. *nigra*). Alfred Wilmott made the second British record of *Taraxacum* sect. *Obliqua*, unaware of the first. The Scalpay trip yielded the first recognised records of *Pedicularis sylvatica* subsp. *hibernica* outside Ireland (although earlier specimens from Wales later came to light).



**FOUR** new taxa were described using the specimens they collected:

**1** *Euphrasia campbelliae*, named after Maybud Campbell



**2** *Raphanus raphanistrum* var.  *aureus*



**3** *Orchis hebridensis* (now *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* subsp. *hebridensis*)



**4** *Dactylorhiza ebudensis*: first mentioned by Campbell; described in 1995

