



KENT BOTANICAL RECORDING GROUP NEWSLETTER

No. 3 August 2011

In this issue: new records, Facebook, rare plant register, requests, 2011 field meeting reports, AGM minutes

New to Kent or Returned to Kent?

Significant records made so far this season include:

New to Kent:

- the large-flowered alien subspecies of Nipplewort, *Lapsana communis* ssp. *intermedia* was identified in South Park car park at Sevenoaks (Geoffrey Kitchener)
- a patch of Small-flowered Fox-and-Cubs, *Pilosella praealta* ssp. *thaumasia* has been confirmed by experts from a roadside bank just outside Knole Park, Sevenoaks (Geoffrey Kitchener)
- *Fumaria reuteri* (Martin's Ramping-fumitory) has been found in several locations along the newly reconstructed A299 near Manston airport, confirmed by Rose Murphy, who points to an association with seed of foreign origin elsewhere (Brian Laney)



Right: *Fumaria reuteri* by the A229

Photo by Geoffrey Kitchener

- *Rosa x pseudorusticana* (the hybrid between Field Rose and Short-styled Field-rose) has been found in a hedgerow between Boughton-under-Blean and Dargate. The BSBI referee, Roger Maskew, considers it to be a backcross (Liam Rooney)
- *Rhinanthus angustifolius* (Greater Yellow-rattle) is in metropolitan West Kent (Saltbox Hill SSSI, Biggin Hill) – reported to the Natural History Museum and noticed as coming into flower later than *Rhinanthus minor*.

Returned to Kent: (last record 1913!)

Lythrum hyssopifolia (Grass-poly), seen by Joyce Pitt in 2010 at Fowlmead County Park, but unable to confirm identity; has now been re-found by Steve Coates and ID confirmed.



For those members already with Facebook accounts, there is now a 'Kent Botany' Page on Facebook! Our page contains regular updates on either interesting plant finds or Rare Plant Register finds in addition to other points of interest concerning to KBRG activities. Anyone wishing to contribute is most welcome (and indeed encouraged!) as this could prove to be a useful way for members to be kept informed and also interact, especially if unable to attend meetings and/or the AGM.

Also for those without Facebook accounts and wishing to keep it that way, they are welcome to 'pop in' and see what has been happening. All you have to do is follow this link - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kent-Botany/223421087698067> Thanks to Liam Rooney for arranging for this to be set up.

Rare Plant Register

The introduction to the register, plus the first draft accounts (16 species beginning with the letter A), are both now available, in electronic form only. These have been circulated to members by email for review in advance of being placed on our website, still as drafts.

These accounts are work in progress. They can be improved. Up-to-date information is needed about whether plants are still at old sites, whether numbers are increasing /decreasing, what threats there may be, etc. Kentish photographs are needed for some accounts: ideally at least one close-up and a habitat shot. (Liam Rooney has many pictures in his rare plant register set on Flickr, but there are plenty of plants not yet covered.)

You can help!

Please let Geoffrey Kitchener know:

- what do you think about the register format?
- what improvements can you suggest to the individual draft accounts?
- do you have records, updates or photographs which can go into the accounts (whether these species or others on the register)?

Requests!

Photographs: have you a photograph showing plants with characteristic Kentish landscape? For example, this could be with oast houses, the White Cliffs or other well-known buildings in the background. This could help refresh the appearance of our BSBI-hosted webpage. Please email to Geoffrey Kitchener (see back page for e mail address).

Bolboschoenus maritimus (Sea Club-rush). Please report any colonies with spikelets on stalks 7-9 cm long (normally of course the spikelets are tightly clustered). Such plants could be *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* (illustrated at www.sekj.org/PDF/anbf44/anbf44-081.pdf), whose distribution in Britain is currently being investigated.

2011 field meetings

Record lists are available for all the field meetings so far, and have been, or are being, distributed to members together with interim reports by email. These reports cover our programme as far as August.



June 2010: Littlestone and Greatstone, Part 2



Photo by Lorna Holland

Above: Gaillardia x grandiflora abundantly naturalised on the dunes

Ten botanists attended our second foray along the coast at Littlestone and Greatstone, co-led by Owen Leyshon from the Romney Marsh Countryside Project and Geoffrey Kitchener. Our first foray last year had only covered part of the ground we intended to botanise and so by popular request this meeting was convened to finish off the remainder. In the event, we still did not cover all the area to which Owen was prepared to take us, which is an indication of the quality of the flora which we encountered.

Last year we had walked the length of TR0824 to the end of the coast green, but our re-visit added 33 records for this square. These included a specimen of *Echium plantagineum* (Purple Viper's-bugloss) growing amongst the more usual *Echium vulgare* (Viper's-bugloss), with purplish flowers and mainly glabrous calyx. At the south end we renewed acquaintance with a couple of colonies of *Silene conica*

(Sand Catchfly), this time to undertake a survey for the BSBI Threatened Plant Project. No doubt due to the preceding drought, numbers of plants were well down on the previous year.

Just in the next 1km square we found two plants of *Rumex x pseudopulcher*, demonstrably intermediate between their parents in the vicinity, Curled Dock and Fiddle Dock.

We then moved on to new territory, and reached the lifeboat station at Romney Sands by lunchtime.



Photo by Geoffrey Kitchener

Above: Enjoying a well-earned lunch break!

Greatstone dunes carried yet more populations of *Silene conica* of the top and sides of low, sandy, part-vegetated humps. This area needs to remain open for the survival of the *Silene*, and we saw plenty of evidence of the enlightened clearance of *Hippophae rhamnoides* (Sea-buckthorn), which has been encroaching on the dunes. Another encroacher, but a very attractive one, was *Gaillardia x grandiflora* (Blanketflower), a bright red-and-yellow hortical hybrid of North American parents. Also abundantly naturalized was the grass *Anisantha madritensis* (Compact Brome).

Owen pointed out to us *Salsola kali* ssp. *kali* (Prickly Saltwort), which frequented a very linear habitat, along the shingle strand line, often growing through small sand heaps. Having reached Greatstone car park, with the dunes narrowing at this point, we then traced the Saltwort back northwards, passing back through square TR0823. We are grateful to Owen for making available his time and local knowledge for a successful survey. Thanks also to Sarah Kitchener for acting as scribe for the day's records, the total for TR0823 being 102 records which, with 7 records from having entered the edge of TR0822, plus 33 for Littlestone mentioned above produced an overall total of 142.



22 June 2011: Lydden NNR / Temple Ewell

Our meeting at the Lydden National Nature Reserve was arranged in order to search for, and to record flora associated with, *Galium pumilum* (Slender Bedstraw) previously recorded here in 1986. When the meeting was set up, *G. pumilum* had not been seen here or elsewhere in Kent, for a number of years, except at Purple Hill (see Kent Botany 2010). The NNR is large and the scarp slope steep, so the prospects might have been uncertain, in spite of a 6-figure grid reference being available. However, fortunately Sue Buckingham had been taking a group in this area some days before and had seen it flowering, when no other similar *Galium* sp had reached that state, and so it was reasonably visible.

When the KBRG contingent arrived, however, the plant had gone to fruit and although we all traversed the spot painstakingly, it was a long time before the foliage was spotted, confined to an area of about 2 x 2 metres. We noted the survey details sought for the BSBI's Threatened Plant project, including the flora to be found within 1 metre of a target plant of the *Galium* – there were 17 other species, including *Genista tinctoria* (Dyer's Greenweed) which was plentiful along many parts of the chalk downland slopes.



Right: *Galium pumilum* in fruit at Lydden

Photo by Liam Rooney

In order to get to this point, we had already spent much of the day botanising from the car park in Temple Ewell, climbing up to the southern part of the reserve and then north-west along the upper scarp. These upper parts were largely exposed to strong winds and we could see rain clouds bowling along, no doubt soaking other parts of the neighbourhood, although we escaped with a short shower around lunchtime.



Photo by Geoffrey Kitchener

Above: Lunchtime at Lydden NNR, sheltering in the lee of some bushes against a strong wind!

At the top of the escarpment, we found *Ceratochloa carinata* (California Brome) along the edge of an arable field, presumably a relic of former, accidental or intentional, sowing. The track beneath the crest was rutted and clayey, with much *Anthemis cotula* (Stinking Chamomile) scattered along it. We encountered both *Rosa micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar) and *Rosa rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar), which enabled a comparison to be made of these apple-scented roses. During the course of the day we also came across two patches of *Cuscuta epithymum* (Dodder) on the grassy slopes, although it was not evident what they were parasitizing.

An attempt was also made to look at former sites for *Neotinea (Orchis) ustulata* (Burnt Orchid), where not already surveyed this season. However, this drew a blank, and the likelihood is that this orchid did not flower in Kent during 2011.

The richness of the reserve flora, together with a foray into Temple Ewell village at the end of the day, meant that the number of records made was high. We recorded 184 different taxa in TR2844 alone, that is, Temple Ewell and the south easternmost part of the reserve. The total number of records made that day in three 1km squares was 275.



5 July 2011: Worth/Hacklinge

Ten members joined Sue Buckingham to explore an area of grassland, ditches and dikes southeast of Worth village with the main purpose of finding and recording the extent of *Baldellia ranunculoides* (Lesser Water-plantain) for the BSBI Threatened Plants Project.

Our route took us on footpaths from the village through fairly intensive agriculture and beside dikes and ditches of varying botanical interest. Sue had previously obtained permission for the group to explore some of the farm fields which are not accessible to the public and in one of these a herd of cattle luckily remained at the far side long enough for us to enter and record from a muddy ditch the following 4 species for the rare plant register: *Triglochin palustris* (Marsh Arrowgrass), *Potamogeton coloratus* (Fen Pondweed), *Juncus subnodulosus* (Blunt-flowered Rush) and *Utricularia vulgaris* (Greater Bladderwort).



Right: *Triglochin palustris* at Worth

Photo by Liam Rooney

Hydrocharis morsus-ranae was found later and also along the Delf stream *Carex elata* (Tufted Sedge). The latter's fruits had completely dispersed which, with the very high water level, made it difficult to separate this sedge from *Carex acutiformis* (Lesser Pond-sedge). We agreed that an assessment of the extent of this species would be better done early next year when flowering/fruitletting.

We continued to a footpath beside the Roaring Gutter Dike where Eric Philp had reported finding *Baldellia ranunculoides* in the past. One member of our group was able to confirm that the banks had been altered in recent years to improve the water flow and presumably because of this, the site no longer seemed suitable, so sadly we were unable to locate any plants.

Other interesting records on the day included *Ranunculus lingua* (Greater Spearwort), *Alisma lanceolatum*, (Narrow-leaved Water-plantain), *Ranunculus circinatus* (Fan-leaved Water-crowfoot), and *Veronica catenata* (Pink Water-speedwell). Designs for grappling hooks came under discussion when we attempted to gather water plants as some were definitely more effective than others. A specimen of *Potamogeton* which Sue took home turned out to be *P. berchtoldii* (Small Pondweed).



16 July 2011: Walmer

Faced with a particularly ominous weather forecast and heavy traffic on all major routes heading for nearby Sandwich and the Open Golf Tournament, our leader, Sue Buckingham, was delighted to meet up with nine enthusiastic members in the car park by Walmer Castle. The object of the day was to search the shingle beach for rare plants and also to record some of the alien flora that has become well-established there and which is threatened by a proposed tidy-up.

The rain wasn't too heavy as the group began by surveying the population of *Lathyrus japonicus* (Sea Pea) for the rare plant register. It had been recorded from here, northwards to Deal and beyond, but after a while a more sheltered part of the beach seemed a better option. So we headed southwards, among scattered *Quercus ilex* (Holm Oak), to record native and alien species including the attractive South African *Senecio inaequidens* (Narrow-leaved Ragwort) which has colonised a large area of the beach here. Alongside it were some massive plants of *Senecio viscosus* (Sticky Groundsel) suggesting a possible hybrid. Material was gathered for later examination at home as the rain, now heavy, precluded opening up of reference books.

One particular area of shingle in front of a row of houses supported a wealth of well-established garden-escapes and throw-outs including *Yucca gloriosa* (Spanish-dagger), *Echinops bannaticus* (Blue Globe-thistle), *Fuchsia magellanica*, *Lychnis coronaria* (Rose Champion), *Hypericum calycinum* (Rose-of-Sharon), *Kniphofia* spp. (Red-hot-pokers), *Sedum forsterianum* (Rock Stonecrop -native to parts of western Britain), a delightful patch of the very pretty *Clematis flammula* (Virgin's Bower) and *Senecio cineraria* (Silver Ragwort). Nearby was the latter's hybrid with Common Ragwort (*Senecio x albescens*).

We managed almost three hours in the rain before having to give up. There were obviously many more plants to record and as it seems that the alien vegetation has a reprieve at least for a while, it is hoped that recording might continue at some other date.

The very large *Senecio viscosus* keyed out in Stace to be just that. The mystery monocotyledon leaf is believed to be from a *Kniphofia* species and possibly *Kniphofia uvaria*. The *Sedum* which Sue named at the time as *Sedum spectabile* could be *Sedum* 'Herbstfreude' and because of the uncertainty, neither of the last two was placed on the record list. The list as circulated by email included *Melittis melissophyllum* (Bastard Balm); but of course, *Melissa officinale* (Lemon Balm) was intended.



30 July 2011: Edenbridge / Haxtead

Our first joint meeting with Surrey Botanical Society (SBS) started at Lingfield Road Recreation Ground with 14 Surrey botanists and 3 from Kent. Our Kentish numbers were later swelled by a latecomer delayed by traffic and by Sarah Kitchener, who joined us after lunch and kindly took the plant notes for the afternoon's Kentish session.

A hot sunny morning was spent on the Kentish side of the River Eden, exploring valley meadow and the river banks. There were no great rarities, but it was good to see a patch of *Achillea ptarmica* (Sneezewort) and we also came across two dock hybrids, *Rumex x dufftii* (the hybrid between Wood and Broad-leaved Docks) and the common *Rumex x pratensis* (the hybrid between Curled and Broad-leaved Docks). It was interesting to be able to share identification approaches between the two county groups, beginning with *Agrostis* and moving on to *Phleum*, where we learned that if the awns of the spikelets could be regarded as straps on a dress, then *P. pratense* is the more daring, with a plunging neckline. The path crossed mown areas in the valley grassland with notices warning that these were used as airstrips: it was as well that our botanising here was not too protracted as we had just passed through when a microlight aircraft took off.



Photo by Geoffrey Kitchener

Above: enjoying a cross county lunch!

Lunch was taken at the county (and vice-county) border by the river. We then moved into Surrey and the recording role passed to Caroline Bateman. SBS now also record in 1km square units, as we do, but have recording sites with different areas. A series of private fishing lakes on the Surrey side seemed likely to qualify as a separate area, but we were unable to explore these fully. However, *Cladium mariscus* (Great Fen-sedge), presumably planted, was establishing and, a little more alarmingly (for it is unlawful to plant this invasive plant in the wild), *Ludwigia grandiflora* (Water-primrose). With a sighting of the decreasing *Spergula arvensis* (Corn Spurry) en route, we proceeded to Cernes Farm and then, via a splendid valley meadow with *Silaum silaus* (Pepper-saxifrage) and *Oenanthe silaifolia* (Narrow-leaved water-dropwort), across the Eden Brook and the River Eden, towards Haxtead.

Our return to Edenbridge was made along the north side of the valley and just before joining the Kent Brook and passing back into Kent we encountered a colourful field apparently designed to taunt botanists, for it must have all been sown, and not recordable as wild – yellow with *Sinapis alba* (White Mustard) and studded with pink and white of *Fagopyron esculentum* (Buckwheat) and blue from *Linum usitatissimum* (Flax) and *Phacelia tanacetifolia*. The recording role passed back to us, and we ended with a total of 14 plants for TQ4344, 119 for TQ4345 and 84 for TQ4445. The first two 1km squares are part of the same tetrad, so under our general recording policy we didn't really need to record the same species in both, but it was easier to record everything we saw.



Photo by Geoffrey Kitchener

Above: an admirable feature of SBS's care for the welfare of botanists was the post-meeting tea, improvised at the car park meeting place! Is this an idea which KBRG could adopt?



3 August 2011: Flimwell

This joint meeting with Sussex Botanical Recording Society (SBRS) was set up for several purposes: general recording; in order to assist SBRS with records needed for the prospective new Sussex Flora and to enable KBRG to survey areas outside the Kent county administrative boundary but inside the botanical vice county of West Kent. The two boundaries are well apart in this area, with West Kent vc16 taking in part of Ticehurst and running from thence along the B2099 towards Elphicks. Both groups have an interest, as SBRS seeks records up to the county boundary and KBRG is prepared to record up to the vice county boundary. Eight botanists assembled at Flimwell, four being members of KBRS, although most with SBRS membership as well. From there we drove to Pashley Manor Gardens, where we had permission to park in their car parking field.

The morning was spent recording in tetrad TQ72E, which included a short section of road which was the vice county boundary, passing through parts of three 1km squares, and 35 West Kent records were made in the course of walking along it. The remainder of the terrain was all in East Sussex, in both local authority and botanical terms. Following lunch at Pashley Manor, two of us dropped out, including Ann

Callow who in place of Pat Donovan (unable to attend due to illness) kindly facilitated the morning's session, and the remainder of us moved back to Flimwell.

Here we followed a path from the Royal Oak into a disturbed area with *Centaureum pulchellum* (Lesser Centaury) and *Epilobium x vicinum* (the hybrid between Short-fruited and American Willowherbs), and thence into the southern fringe of Bedgebury Forest, with naturalising *Prunus lusitanica* (Portugal Laurel) and a magnificent *Quercus petraea* (Sessile Oak).

From the shady forest paths we eventually emerged onto the A268, to cross over into the former Bird Park grounds. The gravel of the old car park had been well colonised with weeds and here we looked at a St. John's-wort which Sue Buckingham had seen many years before. Discussion focussed on this as a candidate for *Hypericum maculatum*, which the Sussex botanists found fairly ordinary, although of great interest to Kentish botanists, as its general distribution more or less stops at the county boundary.



Photo by Sue Buckingham

Subsequently, it was confirmed to be a hybrid with that species, *H. x desetangsii*, no less interesting for Kentish purposes. This is one of our rare plant register taxa, a case where we have included a hybrid because it continues to carry within Kent the genes of a species which has all but disappeared with us.

Left: *Hypericum x desetangsii* near Flimwell.

The old car park was also an exceptional area for *Epilobium* hybrids, of which we saw *E. x brevopilum* (the hybrid between Great and Square-stalked Willowherbs), *E. x novae-civitatis* (the cross between Great and American Willowherbs), *E. x palatinum* (the Hoary / Square-stalked Willowherb cross), *E. x floridulum* (the Hoary / American Willowherb hybrid) and *E. mentiens* (the hybrid between Square-stalked and American Willowherbs). In a dumped area there was a shoot of *Sambucus nigra f. laciniata* (the Cut-leaved Elder) and some *Epipactis helleborine* (Broad-leaved Helleborine); and then we came across a few miserable shaded specimens of *Lobelia urens* (Heath Lobelia). These were feeble in comparison with the display awaiting us at the end of an old path, where a large clearing was covered with blue *Lobelia* flowers. Apparently, these used to appear in the penned areas where birds were kept. Now, however, despite rabbit grazing, brambles and scrub are encroaching.

Right: *Lobelia urens* site



Photo by Sue Buckingham

In a brambly corner, we also saw both *Viburnum opulus* (Guelder-rose) and *V. sargentii* (Asian Guelder-rose), but supposed that the latter, at least, was likely to be a planted survivor and so left it out of the record list. Recording energy was also flagging, as this had been a long hot day, so we then turned back to our Flimwell parking point.

The afternoon's session had, in the KBRG listing, produced 134 records in TQ7131, 94 records in TQ7231 and 22 in TQ7230. SBRS recorders were concentrating on adding records to their existing data. The grand total of 285 Kentish records was exceptionally successful, given that many more plants were seen in the morning when botanising wholly within East Sussex county and vice county.



10 August 2011: Bedgebury



Photo by Sue Poyser

Above: Leading from the front!

The meeting leader demonstrating how to record *Eleogiton fluitans* without use of a grapnel...

Seven KBRG members joined Sue Buckingham for the meeting at Bedgebury National Pinetum. The main purpose was to record the extent and associated plants of *Cuscuta epithymum* (Dodder) for the BSBI Threatened Plants Project. We were fortunate in having Chris Reynolds, Curator of the Pinetum, join us for the morning and he led us to a fine area of flowering *Calluna vulgaris* (Heather) where Dodder first appeared some 10 years ago but has been declining recently as the heather has grown.

Having established that Dodder only flourishes in the early successional stages of heathland and that therefore management is important in ensuring its long term survival, Chris discussed his intention to

embark on a 6 year plan to flail and collect the heather in a different third of the area every other year. It was interesting that the most prolific areas for Dodder were in large gaps in the heather cover and that it was parasitising a close, low mat of *Potentilla erecta* (Tormentil) and *Galium saxatile* (Heath Bedstraw).

Ulex minor (Dwarf Gorse), *Succisa pratensis* (Devil's-bit Scabious), *Solidago virgaurea*, (Goldenrod), *Erica cinerea*, (Bell Heather) and *Erica tetralix* (Cross-leaved Heath) put on a fine display in the Pinetum grasslands where we also recorded *Oreopteris limbosperma*, (Lemon-scented Fern) and *Euphrasia officinalis* ssp. *anglica* (English Eyebright) for the rare plant register. *Mimulus moschata* (Musk), *Viola palustris* (Marsh Violet) and two *Hieracium* (Hawkweed) species were particularly interesting finds.

After lunch we headed for Louisa Lake where many rare plants have been recorded in the past but sadly its margins have become very overgrown with *Rhododendron ponticum*. *Carex echinata* (Star Sedge), *Carex laevigata* (Smooth-stalked Sedge), *Scutellaria minor* (Lesser Skullcap), *Salix aurita* (Eared Willow) were still present and finally in a shaded woodland pool to the north we found *Eleogiton fluitans* (Floating Club-rush) for the rare plant register and *Agrimonia procera* (Fragrant Agrimony) nearby.



Photo by Sue Buckingham

Above: Examining Dodder with Chris Reynolds



**Minutes of the Kent Botanical Recording Group
Annual General Meeting
Saturday 9 April 2011
2.00pm**

This meeting was held at the Kent Wildlife Trust headquarters, Tyland Barn, Chatham Road, Sandling, Maidstone, ME14 BD. Thirty members of the Group attended including the Chairman and Vice County Recorder for Kent, Geoffrey Kitchener.

1 WELCOME

The Chairman began by welcoming everyone to the meeting, giving thanks to Eric Philp for agreeing to give a talk on the New Atlas, to Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) for providing the room and to Sue Buckingham for offering to take the minutes.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE had been received from Lorna and Derek Holland, David Johnson, Judith Shorter, Jan Armishaw, Paul Harmes, Alfred Gay and Rodney Burton.

3 MINUTES OF MARCH 2010 MEETING

These were published last year in newsletter no 1 and the Chairman said he hoped that he had captured any action points from the minutes in the current agenda.

4 REPORT FOR THE YEAR

The Chairman explained that the group's activities and recording results are largely summarised in Kent Botany, at least to January 2011.

He listed the following headline achievements:

- 5 field meetings following the inaugural indoor meeting on 13 March last year;
- over 12,000 records made and input to the county database (now nearly 14,000);
- 889 of those 2010 records were for rare plant register (RPR) plants;
- publication of rare plant register list, 2 newsletters and annual report, Kent Botany;
- expansion of the group from 37 to 67 members.

Then he suggested that it might be worth going back to the inaugural meeting minutes to see how far those achievements fulfilled the expectations of the time which were as follows.

- The Group's records will be fed through to the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) and the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre (KMBRC), and assistance in validating KMBRC's other records will be given.
The Chairman gave the current position of nearly 14,000 records sent to BSBI in April. He also informed everyone that we can now go to BSBI Online National Maps and see our group's records as blue dots on the maps; and he added that coverage at the 10 km level is looking quite good considering that we've only been operating for a year.

- The current recording priority is for compiling a rare plant register. General plant recording is a middling priority, and 1km square (rather than tetrad) records are preferred for general records. *The Chairman said that recorders have been very helpful in providing records to 1km or finer level. The real benefits from this, he added, will be precise data for RPR plants. The RPR would be considered in more detail under agenda item 5.*
- The Group will operate informally for a year, co-ordinated by Geoffrey Kitchener, and then consider adopting a constitution. *Taken under agenda item 6.*
- We said our purpose was to be a focus for the recording of vascular plants in Kent by
 - providing a means of contact and communication, open to all who are interested in botanical recording in Kent and
 - liaising with, and supporting, other natural history organisations with relevant interests.*Contact and communication has been provided through field meetings, feedback of the results of them, emails for those on email, our publications and our website. Liaising with other natural history organisations is helped by our membership representing so many of them, although formal liaison may have been limited. We had a successful joint meeting with Sussex Botanical Recording Society and another is planned this year, also Surrey Botanical Society. This concluded the chairman's report. He expressed hope that in general we have been meeting the expectations of those of us who formed the group here on 13 March last year, and those who joined subsequently and he invited anyone present to comment if they wished. He asked have we have been fulfilling our purpose appropriately and is there anything else or more that we could do?*

Dan Clay asked how long it might take him to learn scientific names, implying that he and some other members would be pleased if vernacular names were included as well as scientific. The Chairman acknowledged that this can be a difficulty and agreed to consider this possibility with regard to the Rare Plant List and said that he would be more conscious of the need to add vernacular names both at meetings and in publications. **Action: Geoffrey Kitchener**

Liam Rooney asked if there were any plans for an independent website for the Group. Surrey Botanical Society has one where members are able to interact with each other. This would make it possible to exchange details of new discoveries as they happen rather than waiting until the next newsletter. The Chairman agreed to ask BSBI, our current website provider, if it is possible to add a blog to our site. **John Puckett** pointed out that were we to consider going independent, the cost was likely to be prohibitive.

Action: Geoffrey Kitchener

5 PLANS FOR 2011 ACTIVITIES

- The **2011 meetings programme** had been e-mailed in draft to all those on line members and, when finalised, will be posted to any members not on e-mail. A copy draft was on display in the meeting room.
- **RARE PLANT REGISTER.** Regarding the development of the project the Chairman explained that we have made a good start on records which are up to date, and give precise locations and population data, but there are still several years to go. "Adopt a plant" has had mixed success, although some people have chosen to do this, many people prefer to adopt their local area and look for the RPR plants in it, which was also helpful. This may mean that we have a rump of

plants which are not near any members or which people do not think to look for, or are unsure where to look, but we have made a start by listing all these in Newsletter No. 2. The Chairman pointed out that he has some records of old locations, and of course we have the knowledge of everyone in this room, including Eric.

The Chairman said that he was proposing to produce the register in draft to begin with, in instalments. This would be for all Rare Plant Register plants, even if there are no records for 2010 onwards yet. Then anyone can see what needs to be done to update or improve the information for each plant. There are many ways in which each plant could be written up, and a copy of a proposed introduction and together with some of the plants beginning with A were already on display in the room. He invited everyone to look at this and welcomed any feedback. He said that if anyone would like to write up any of the plant accounts themselves, this would be even better. The drafts could of course be emailed to members or put on our website.

6 CONSTITUTION

The Chairman reminded everyone that last March we said *“The Group will operate informally for a year, co-ordinated by Geoffrey Kitchener, and then consider adopting a constitution”*.

He had thought that maybe we would have a draft constitution ready and circulated before the 2011 Annual General Meeting, but this had not been achieved, and we should consider what we need.

He said that:

- The purpose of a constitution should be to facilitate an understanding of how we work;
- It is possible for the KBRG to have that understanding without a constitution – he thought that Surrey Botanical Society does not have one. However, it’s probably better practice to have one;
- a constitution would normally set out the purpose of the group, arrangements for having AGMs and special meetings, for having a committee and whatever officers are needed and what are the powers, privileges and obligations of members;
- he thought that we have the following options:
 - to attempt to define all these things now and agree how they are going to be worked up for adoption later (because you cannot realistically produce appropriate wording for a constitution which is then immediately adopted);
 - not to do anything at all now, but wait until KBRG is a more mature society; or
 - to try to agree the need for an executive committee (and perhaps a President and Chairman), and then ask the executive to think about this.

The group were invited to discuss these options. **Sue Buckingham** felt that we at least need a few people to arrange the annual programme of field meetings. She said that this would take some of the pressure off Geoffrey and would hopefully enable us to fix our programme early enough to avoid clashing dates with Kent Field Club outings. **Dr Lesley Mason**, who arranges the meetings for Kent Field Club, offered to let us have her dates in December before publication in the KFC programme.

Action: Sue Buckingham

In the absence of any further comment and with no volunteers from the floor, the Chairman said that he was happy to continue the co-ordination role he had over the last year, but would not want the group organisation to be just a one-man-band.

- He did not think that lots of officers are required at present. Administration is fairly straightforward, provided that most of the membership has email.

- In reply to a question from **Dan Clay** about costs, the Chairman explained that there is no treasurer at present, because KBRG has no material expenses. The AGM room was provided free by KWT. The cost of postages, including inaugural circulation, was £12. The cost of printing is not so easy to assess, but @10p per side, is approximately £30. The cost of servicing non-email members, including printing assessed as above, is £7 to £8 per member and he did not think a general membership fee was appropriate yet although a contribution from non-email members is probably appropriate. (But he noted they do not have the full range of benefits as others which include email reminders / updates and post-meeting record lists.)
- He said that it would be good to have an executive committee, with power to “meet” by email so as to minimise time and travelling commitment. Help in putting together field meeting programmes would be particularly useful, but ideas generally would be good. The Chairman said that it would be a step forward to a formal constitution if we were now to appoint a President (a non-executive role), and he proposed that Eric Philp be appointed. *(Eric was born in West Kent and has lived in the county almost all his life (there was a brief spell away to complete National Service.) He was Keeper of Natural History at Maidstone Museum, where he worked from 1956 to 1993, and County Recorder for Botanical Society of the British Isles for nearly 40 years. He is the author of The Atlas of Kent Flora, published in 1982, and The New Atlas of Kent Flora, which appeared in 2010.)* The meeting strongly endorsed this recommendation. **Eric Philp** agreed to be President and the Chairman said that we were indeed privileged to have him.
- For the time being the group would move on informally.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS or comments

Rosemary Pavis thanked Geoffrey for his hard work, a sentiment that was applauded by all those present.

Doug Grant asked where the 14,000 records were from and Geoffrey explained that in addition to his own input of 11-12,000, over 2,000 were from the group including some from surveys by Joyce Pitt.

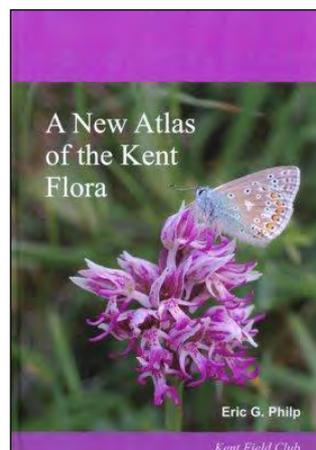
8 DATE OF NEXT AGM

Subject to availability of venue **the next AGM will be Saturday 31 March 2012**

Regarding a venue for this, the Chairman reminded everyone that last year, out of consideration for east Kent members, we had a request that Brogdale be considered as a venue for alternate AGMs. The suggestion seemed to be favourably received by those present. **Action: Geoffrey Kitchener**

With no further business the formal part of the meeting closed at 2.40 pm and was followed by a much appreciated talk by Eric Philp on the making of the New Atlas of the Kent Flora.

Photo by John Badmin



Above: Eric Philp, President of KBRG, and the front cover of the New Atlas of the Kent Flora

Contributions and photographs for the next newsletter will be most welcome!

Contributions, letters, queries and thoughts, details of recommended and relevant books, and photographs etc, for the next newsletter are welcomed by the editor!

Whilst KRBG does not produce a research journal as such, there may also be scope to put articles of a substantial nature and other papers, onto the website by way of publication as an alternative.

If sending photographs for inclusion in the newsletter by e mail, 300dpi minimum, please!

All contributions should be sent to Geoffrey Kitchener, contact details below.

Thanks to Sarah Kitchener, Sue Buckingham and Kate Kersey for help in compiling and laying out this newsletter and to John Badmin, Sue Buckingham, Lorna Holland, Sue Poyser and Liam Rooney for photographs.

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The editor, Geoffrey Kitchener, wishes to draw attention to the fact that neither he, nor the Kent Botanical Recording Group, are answerable for opinions which contributors may express in their articles; each author is alone responsible for the contents and substance of their work.

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