

# KENT BOTANICAL RECORDING GROUP

## NEWSLETTER

No. 1 April 2010



Few flowers were out by early March after this hard winter, but 37 Kentish botanists were out and about on 13 March at Tyland Barn....

Find out more about what happened inside....

## **At a meeting on 13 March 2010 at Tyland Barn, 36 Kentish botanists made a decision!**



We resolved to form the  
**Kent Botanical Recording Group.**

The key decisions were:

- Its purpose is 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.
- 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.
- Recording will not be limited to the administrative county of Kent with the Medway unitary authority area, but will extend to the East and West Kent vice county boundaries.
- The current recording priority is for compiling a rare plant register. General plant recording is middling priority, and 1km square (rather than tetrad) records are preferred for general records.
- The Group will operate informally for a year, co-ordinated by Geoffrey Kitchener, and then consider adopting a constitution.

A fuller account of the meeting by Sue Buckingham appears later in this newsletter.

### **Appeal to Members**

Any suggestions you may have, or help you can give as regards organising group activities will be most welcome.

In particular, this applies to recording meetings this year.

Please contact Geoffrey Kitchener!  
(contact details at end of newsletter)



## County Rare Plant Register...Why not Adopt a Plant??!

At the Group's inaugural meeting we discussed priorities in plant recording. Fuller information on our rarer plants was a high priority; many counties have rare plant registers. Our neighbouring county, Sussex, published an excellent register in 2001. This is now out of print, but 10 other county registers can be viewed online via the BSBI's website.

Now is our opportunity to compile a register for Kent!

Are our rarer plants still out there?  
Are they flourishing or under threat?  
How big are the populations?

Group members can help to answer all these questions. By each adopting one or more plants and recording current information, members can contribute to the register.

### What to Choose...

Select your plant(s) from the following list, and let Geoffrey Kitchener know, so he may co-ordinate choices. The first thing you will see is that there is a lot of choice! You may wish to choose for East Kent, West Kent or both, or perhaps a more local area. Any offer of help is welcome. It will be useful if you already know some sites for your plant, but do not let it deter you if you don't! Indeed, it's the plants and sites which few people have seen that may most merit search and updating. Part of the co-ordination support will be to help ferret out information regarding previous sightings. Why not pick something obscure?? East Kent orchids are generally well covered anyway, so there should not be need for lots of volunteers for *Ophrys fuciflora* (Late Spider-orchid). And Kent Wildlife Trust reserves often already have a rare plant monitoring programme.

### How is the list assembled?

The list of plants is still a draft one. It has been assembled on the basis of concentrating on native species and listing those which are nationally rare or scarce and those which are locally rare or scarce. A local rarity has three or less sites in the county. A locally scarce plant has 10 or less. For convenience, sites have been equated with recent tetrad records. The national position may be very different from the local one. *Orchis purpurea* (Lady Orchid) may be Nationally Endangered, but it has many Kentish locations and is quite abundant in some of them. It may be that compiling the register will show that our local categorisation for some other plants will need changing.

A consultation paper is available as regards the choice of plants, the recording area and the structure of the proposed register – please email Geoffrey Kitchener for a copy if you are interested. As a result of the early stages of consultation, it has been recognised that progress with a Greater London rare plant register has come to a halt. So we are expecting to include the whole of the botanical vice county of Kent in the Kent register. This will avoid a gap in coverage for metropolitan Kent (which extends to Deptford).

## What to record

What do we need for a rare plant record? The usual, of course: name of plant, date of sighting, recorder (and determiner, if different) plus location. Location should include an Ordnance Survey grid reference at least to 1 km square level. If you have a GPS tracking unit, then a more precise reference can be achieved. In addition, comments about the habitat, the size of the population and any obvious threats will be important.

Even if you haven't "chosen" a particular rare plant, any record of one which you encounter in the field will be helpful. If you would like a one-page version of the list to carry around with you as a reminder, please request from Geoffrey Kitchener.



*Althaea hirsuta* (Rough Marsh-mallow) (above) is being treated as an exception to the rare plant list's concentration on native plants.

This special treatment is due to the first record in the British Isles being Kentish - from near Cobham in 1792 where, between Cobham and Cuxton, it still grows.

### Kent Rare Plant Register – draft list

#### Notes:



- N (in black) means nationally rare / scarce – lower risk

<i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i>	N
<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>	N+L
<i>Chenopodium bonus-henricus</i>	L
<i>Chenopodium chenopodioides</i> *	N



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>N (in red)</b> means nationally rare / scarce – higher risk (Endangered or Critically Endangered]</li><li>• <b>L (in black)</b> means locally scarce – lower risk</li><li>• <b>L (in red)</b> means locally rare – higher risk</li><li>• <b>Plants in italics with asterisks are locally common (seen in 20 or more tetrads since 1991)</b></li><li>• <b>So the highest priority for investigation is likely to be the plants labelled <b>N+L</b> or <b>L (in red)</b>. The lowest priority will be the asterisked and italicised plants.</b></li></ul>			
<i>Aceras anthropophorum</i> *	N	Chenopodium glaucum	N
Adonis annua	N+L	Chenopodium murale	N+L
Agrostemma githago	N+L	Chenopodium vulvaria	N+L
Agrostis vinealis	L	Cicuta virosa	N+L
Ajuga chamaepitys	N	Cirsium eriophorum	L
Alchemilla filicaulis ssp. vestita	L	Cladium mariscus	L
Allium oleraceum	N+L	<i>Clinopodium acinos</i> *	N
Alopecurus bulbosus	N+L	Clinopodium calamintha	N+L
Alopecurus aequalis	L	<i>Cynoglossum officinale</i> *	N
Althaea hirsuta	L	Dactylorhiza incarnata	L
<i>Althaea officinalis</i> *	N	Dactylorhiza maculata	L
Anagallis arvensis subsp. foemina	N+L	Daucus carota subsp. gummifer	N+L
Anagallis minima	N	Descurainia sophia	L
Anagallis tenella	L	Dianthus armeria	N+L
<i>Anthemis cotula</i> *	N	Dianthus deltoides	N+L
Apium inundatum	L	Dipsacus pilosus	L
Arabis hirsuta	L	Drosera rotundifolia	L
Asplenium septentrionale	N+L	Dryopteris aemula	L
Baldellia ranunculoides	N+L	Eleocharis multicaulis	L
Brassica oleracea	N	Eleogiton fluitans	L
<i>Bromus hordeaceus subsp. thominei</i> *	N	Epilobium palustre	L
Bromus secalinus	N+L	Epilobium roseum	L
Bupleurum tenuissimum	N	Epipactis palustris	L
Buxus sempervirens	N	Epipactis phyllanthes	N+L
Callitriche truncata	N+L	Equisetum sylvaticum	L
Campanula glomerata	L	Eriophorum angustifolium	L
Cardamine bulbifera	N	Erodium maritimum	L
Cardamine impatiens	N+L	Erodium moschatum	L
Carex curta	L	Erophila glabrescens	L
<i>Carex divisa</i> *	N	Eryngium campestre	N+R
Carex echinata	L	Euphorbia cyparissias	L
Carex elata	L	<i>Euphorbia exigua</i> *	N
Carex elongata	N+L	Euphorbia paralias	L
Carex extensa	L	Euphrasia anglica	N+L
Carex nigra	L	Euphrasia confusa	L
Carex panicea L		<i>Euphrasia pseudokernerii</i> *	N
Carex pulicaris	L	Festuca arenaria	N+L
Carex rostrata L		Filago pyramidata	N+L
Carex vesicaria	L	<i>Filago vulgaris</i> *	N
Carex viridula ssp. brachyrrhyncha	L	Frankenia laevis	N+L
Carex vulpina	N+L	Fumaria parviflora	N+L
Centaurea cyanus	N	Fumaria vaillantii	N+L
Helleborus foetidus	N	Galeopsis angustifolia	N+L
Herminium monorchis	N+L	Galium parisiense	N+L
Himantoglossum hircinum	N	Galium uliginosum	L
<i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i> *	N	Gastroidium ventricosum	N+L
Hippuris vulgaris	L	Genista anglica	L
		Gentianella anglica	N+L
		Geranium purpureum subsp. purpureum	N+L
		Gnaphalium luteoalbum	L
		Gnaphalium sylvaticum	N
		Groenlandia densa	N+L
		Gymnadenia conopsea subsp. densiflora	L
		Orobanche picridis	N+L
		Orobanche purpurea	N+L
		Orobanche rapum-genistae	N+L
		Osmunda regalis	L

<i>Hordeum marinum</i> *	N	Papaver argemone	N+L
<i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i> *	N	<i>Parapholis incurva</i> *	N
<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>	N+L	<i>Parentucellia viscosa</i>	L
<i>Hypericum elodes</i>	L	<i>Persicaria bistorta</i>	L
<i>Hypericum maculatum</i> x <i>perforatum</i>	L	<i>Persicaria minor</i>	N+L
<i>Hypericum montanum</i>	N+L	<i>Peucedanum officinale</i>	N+L
<i>Hypochaeris glabra</i>	N+L	<i>Pilosella peleteriana</i> [or perhaps extinct?]	N+L
<i>Iberis amara</i>	N+L	<i>Plantago major</i> ssp. <i>intermedia</i>	L
<i>Inula crithmoides</i> *	N	<i>Platanthera bifolia</i>	N+L
<i>Isolepis cernua</i>	L	<i>Platanthera chlorantha</i> *	N
<i>Jasione montana</i>	L	<i>Poa bulbosa</i> *	N
<i>Juncus acutus</i>	N+L	<i>Poa infirma</i> *	N
<i>Juncus squarrosus</i>	L	<i>Polygala amarella</i>	N+L
<i>Juncus subnodulosus</i>	L	<i>Polygonatum multiflorum</i> [see end of list]	L
<i>Juniperus communis</i>	N	<i>Polygonum rurivagum</i>	L
<i>Lactuca saligna</i>	N+L	<i>Polypogon monspeliensis</i> *	N
<i>Lathyrus aphaca</i>	N	<i>Populus nigra</i> ssp. <i>betulifolia</i> [see end of list]	L
<i>Lathyrus japonicus</i>	N+L	<i>Potamogeton acutifolius</i>	N+L
<i>Lepidium heterophyllum</i>	L	<i>Potamogeton coloratus</i>	N+L
<i>Lepidium latifolium</i> *	N	<i>Potamogeton friesii</i>	N+L
<i>Leymus arenarius</i>	L	<i>Potamogeton obtusifolius</i>	L
<i>Linaria repens</i>	L	<i>Potamogeton pusillus</i>	L
<i>Lithospermum arvense</i>	N+L	<i>Potentilla anglica</i>	L
<i>Lobelia urens</i>	N+L	<i>Potentilla argentea</i>	N+L
<i>Medicago minima</i>	N	<i>Potentilla palustris</i>	L
<i>Medicago polymorpha</i>	N	<i>Puccinellia fasciculata</i> *	N
<i>Mentha pulegium</i>	L	<i>Puccinellia rupestris</i> *	N
<i>Minuartia hybrida</i>	N+L	<i>Pyrola rotundifolia</i>	N+L
<i>Misopates orontium</i>	N+L	<i>Pyrus pyrastra</i> L	
<i>Monotropa hypopitys</i>	N+L	<i>Radiola linoides</i>	N+L
<i>Myosotis secunda</i>	L	<i>Ranunculus arvensis</i>	N+L
<i>Myriophyllum verticillatum</i>	N+L	<i>Ranunculus hederaceus</i>	L
<i>Nardus stricta</i>	L	<i>Ranunculus parviflorus</i>	L
<i>Narthecium ossifragum</i>	L	<i>Ranunculus peltatus</i>	L
<i>Neottia nidus-avis</i>	N	<i>Ranunculus tripartitus</i>	N+L
<i>Nepeta cataria</i>	N+L	<i>Raphanistrum raphanistrum</i> L. ssp. <i>maritimum</i>	L
<i>Nymphoides peltata</i> *	N	<i>Rosa agrestis</i>	N+L
<i>Oenanthe fistulosa</i> *	N	<i>Rosa spinosissima</i>	L
<i>Oenanthe pimpinelloides</i> [see end of list]	L	<i>Rubia peregrina</i>	L
<i>Oenanthe silaifolia</i>	N+L	<i>Rumex crispus</i> subsp. <i>uliginosus</i>	N+L
<i>Onobrychis vicifolia</i> *	N	<i>Rumex maritimus</i>	L
<i>Ophrys fuciflora</i>	N+L	<i>Rumex palustris</i> [see end of list]	L
<i>Ophrys insectifera</i> *	N	<i>Ruppia cirrhosa</i>	N+L
<i>Ophrys sphegodes</i> *	N	<i>Sagina nodosa</i>	L
<i>Orchis morio</i>	N	<i>Salicornia fragilis</i> *	N
<i>Orchis purpurea</i> *	N	<i>Salicornia obscura</i>	N+L
<i>Orchis simia</i>	N+L	<i>Salicornia pusilla</i>	N
<i>Orchis ustulata</i>	N+L	<i>Salix repens</i>	L
<i>Oreopteris limbosperma</i>	L	<i>Salsola kali</i> subsp. <i>kali</i>	N+L
<i>Orobanche caryophyllacea</i>	N+L	<i>Salvia pratensis</i>	N+L
<i>Orobanche elatior</i>	L	<i>Sambucus ebulus</i>	L
<i>Orobanche hederæ</i> [see end of list]	L	<i>Sarcocornia perennis</i> *	N
<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	N+L	<i>Saxifraga granulata</i>	L
<i>Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani</i> x <i>triqueter</i>	N+L	<b>If, as currently proposed, the metropolitan part of West Kent (vice county 16) is included in the register area, then the following changes will apply to this list:</b>	
<i>Scleranthus annuus</i>	N+L		
<i>Senecio aquaticus</i>	L		
<i>Serratula tinctoria</i>	L		

<i>Silene conica</i>	N+L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Oenanthe pimpinelliodes</i> is omitted;</li> <li>• <i>Orobanche hederæ</i> is retained, but its status changes from locally rare (L) to scarce (L);</li> <li>• <i>Polygonatum multiflorum</i> is omitted;</li> <li>• <i>Populus nigra</i> ssp. <i>betulifolia</i> is omitted;</li> <li>• <i>Rumex palustris</i> is retained, but its status changes from locally rare (L) to scarce (L);</li> <li>• <i>Tilia cordata</i> is retained, but its status changes from locally rare (L) to scarce (L).</li> </ul>
<i>Silene gallica</i>	N+L	
<i>Silene noctiflora</i>	N+L	
<i>Silene nutans</i>	N	
<i>Sium latifolium</i>	N	
<i>Sonchus palustris</i>	N+L	
<i>Sparganium natans</i>	L	
<i>Spergula arvensis</i> *	N	
<i>Spiranthes spiralis</i> *	N	
<i>Stachys arvensis</i> *	N	
<i>Suaeda vera</i>	N+L	
<i>Teesdalia nudicaulis</i>	N	
<i>Teucrium botrys</i>	L	
<i>Thalictrum flavum</i>	L	
<i>Thelypteris palustris</i>	N+L	
<i>Tilia cordata</i> [see end of list]	L	
<i>Trifolium glomeratum</i>	N+L	
<i>Trifolium squamosum</i> *	N	
<i>Trifolium suffocatum</i> *	N	
<i>Triglochin palustre</i>	L	
<i>Ulex gallii</i> L		
<i>Umbilicus rupestris</i>	L	 <p><i>Ajuga chamaepitys</i> (Ground-pine)</p>  <p><i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i> (Shepherd's-needle)</p>
<i>Utricularia vulgaris</i>	L	
<i>Valeriana dioica</i>	L	
<i>Valerianella dentata</i> *	N	
<i>Verbascum lychnitis</i> *	N	
<i>Vicia bithynica</i>	N+L	
<i>Vicia lutea</i>	N+L	
<i>Vicia sylvatica</i>	L	
<i>Viola canina</i>	N+L	
<i>Viola tricolor</i>	N	
<i>Vulpia ciliata</i> subsp. <i>ambigua</i> *	N	
<i>Vulpia fasciculata</i>	N+L	
<i>Vulpia unilateralis</i>	N+L	
<i>Wahlenbergia hederacea</i>	N+L	
<i>Wolffia arrhiza</i>	N	
<i>Zostera marina</i>	N+L	
<i>Zostera noltei</i>	N+L	



# Submitting records...important information

## Where do my records go?

Please send your records to Geoffrey Kitchener (contact details at the end of this newsletter). He will then raise any query and, subject to this, enter accepted records onto a MapMate database. From this database, records will be passed to the Botanical Society for the British Isles and the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre.

## What goes into a record?

A record has these elements: name of plant, date of sighting, recorder (and determiner, if different) plus location and any comments:

- *Name of plant*: latin name, please, with or without English.
- *Date of sighting*: self explanatory.
- *Recorder*: whoever saw the plant – if someone else identified it, their name should be given separately as the determiner.
- *Location*: this will be a place name plus an ordnance survey grid reference. The place name is up to you, but it is helpful to include a name which can be found on an ordnance survey or street map. The Ordnance Survey grid reference can be a bit trickier, so this is explained further below.
- *Comments*: optional, but may include a brief habitat description. For rare plants, please refer to the county rare plant register article above. Whilst general records are welcome, the priority for 2010 will be records for plants on the rare plants list, and the comments can be important for these.

## Finding an Ordnance Survey reference



Unless you have a GPS unit, which will give a very precise reference for your location, you will need to begin with a map. The Ordnance Survey Landranger series is fine (6 maps cover Kent, although one is mostly Surrey). Explorer maps are even better as their scale shows individual fields (10 maps cover Kent). However, they are larger and seem to disintegrate more in the field, so it helps to buy them as, or make them, plasticised.

You can, though, download and print off your own map for a recording area. Search online for "Ordnance Survey Get a Map", and you can copy and save 2km x 2km square maps at the same scale as Explorer.

So with a map, you should be able to work out where you (and your plant) are in the field, although there are some areas, such as extensive woodland where this may not be easy. Converting your location into a map reference is the next step.



Your first decision is, how accurate do you want to be? Many botanical records have been made on a tetrad basis, that is to say that they are allocated to the relevant one of the 25 squares, each measuring 2km x 2km, which fall within a 10km x 10km square bounded by the map's main 10km blue gridlines.

The KBRG is not using tetrads, but is aiming for minimum accuracy of 1km x 1km squares bounded by the map's blue gridlines. So if, for example, you have found a plant on the shingle at Kingsdown, you name your 1km square by taking the grid letters given in the map notes (in this case, TR – Kent is either TQ or TR). Then you add the number of the line running from bottom to top of the map which forms the left hand side of the relevant square (in this case, 38). Then, the number of the line running from right to left of the map which forms the bottom side of the relevant square (in this case, 47). So your square is called TR3847, and any plant within it can be given that reference.

For interesting or rare plants, it is better to give a more accurate reference if one can. In this case, one has to estimate what square the plant would be in if the 1km square were divided into 10 squares of 100m x 100m. One imagines vertical gridlines numbered 1 to 9 and horizontal gridlines similarly numbered.

So if the plant is within the mini-square whose left hand boundary is gridline 0 and whose bottom boundary is gridline 5, then those numbers get added to the first and second parts of the 1km square number. So TR3847 becomes TR380475.



There is a good explanation in KMBRC's guide at:

<http://www.kmbrc.org.uk/recording/help/gridrefhelp.php?page=8>

If you are trying to reconstruct where you were after the event, there is always Google Earth. Some recording groups, such as Surrey Botanical Society, have online Google Earth based facilities where you can view a satellite image of your location with an overlay of road names and the ability to read off the map reference. It is possible to refocus these on another county.



You can manage without a GPS unit, but you may wish you could simply press a button!



*Crambe maritima* (Sea-kale) at Sandwich Bay.

## In what format do I provide my records?

Any record is welcome, but the more standardised the record, the easier it is to input it on a database.

For the odd record, the format doesn't matter a great deal, although it's helpful if it's sent by email. If set out as in the example below, this makes it clear that everything needed has been given.

Taxon	Site	Grid ref	Recorder	Determiner	Date	Comment
<i>Crambe maritima</i>	Sandwich Bay	TR3658	Kitchener, G.	Kitchener, G.	3 June 2009	On shingle

This would be a reasonable account for a plant such as that pictured on the previous page. If it had been something listed in the draft rare plant register, then population details and a fuller grid reference would be even more helpful.

**If you have a lot of records**, it would be more helpful to provide them, laid out as above, as an Excel table. A sample table can be obtained from Geoffrey Kitchener by email request.

The table format will be reviewed after trialling, as it may be made more compatible with inputting to a MapMate database.

Any records from 2010 onwards will be grouped in a new date class on BSBI website maps and these identify trends. BSBI is using mistletoe as an example by updating its website distribution map with 2010 records.

**So, let us have your 2010 mistletoe records now, please!**



# Summary of proceedings of the inaugural meeting of the Kent Botanical Recording Group Saturday 13 March 2010 at Tyland Barn

Some 36 invitees, together with the chairman, attended the meeting to explore whether there is support for a botanical recording group in Kent. Geoffrey Kitchener, newly appointed BSBI Vice County Recorder for Kent, chaired the meeting, which began at 11.00 am.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The chairman began by declaring that there will be two major botanical events in Kent in 2010 – (1) the publication of Eric Philp's *New Atlas of the Kentish Flora* and (2) this inaugural recording group meeting. He thanked those attending, noting that most of those who could not come had contacted him. He invited all present to inform anyone about the group who hadn't received an invitation but might be interested. He also thanked Kent Wildlife Trust for making available the meeting room without cost.

## 2. PURPOSE OF MEETING

### 2.1 Support for a recording group

The number of people present made it obvious that there is indeed support for a recording group.

### 2.2 Name and purpose of group

It was proposed that the group be named the **Kent Botanical Recording Group** and its 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.

The chairman emphasized that the group was to be about recording and not just about appreciating botany. It would operate as a group with cohesion and communication, whereas at present there are a number of individual botanical activities going on in the County. The ensuing discussion demonstrated that there was little or no consistency as regards where records were currently being sent; many were uncertain as to where and how their records should be submitted; and there was an obvious need to clarify the situation.

The chairman concluded by emphasizing the supportive relationship which the group would have with other organisations, trying to complement them, not to compete with them.

There was no objection to the adoption of the name or to the proposed purpose.

Rodney Burton asked if there were any proposals for further formalisation of the group. The chairman replied that the proposal was to run in 'shadow mode' for a year, after which we should be able to produce a constitution.

### 2.3 Other issues

#### Use of records

It was proposed that the recording group should ensure that its records are co-ordinated in order to pass the information on to KMBRC and BSBI for their databases.

**BSBI:** As BSBI Kentish recorder, Geoffrey Kitchener enters records onto a database whose contents are passed on to BSBI. He went on to explain its role and how the records are used for scientific purposes, for research or conservation. The BSBI's biological recording database is one of the largest in the world, providing reference material for such things as the *New Atlas of the British and Irish*

*Flora*. BSBI records are shared with the national Biological Records Centre and the National Biodiversity Network Gateway. Plant distribution maps are available for viewing on its website and records which are sent to BSBI can eventually be seen incorporated into these maps.

**KMBRC:** The chairman invited Dr Hannah Cook from KMBRC to comment on the Centre's use of records and she explained that it now holds 1¼ million records on its database, of which 450,000 relate to plants. Records are used in contributing to reports for Kent Wildlife Trust (**KWT**), assisting members of the public with schemes to attract wildlife and in providing reports associated with planning applications so that ecologists can make properly informed decisions.

Currently part of KMBRC's work has been contributing to Eric Philp's *Atlas*, which including creating the maps. KMBRC records are eventually sent on to a National Biodiversity Network once properly validated. The Centre has many accurate records from Joyce Pitt and other surveyors at KWT and from Eric Philp (the latter's records will not become available for use, though, until after publication of his *Atlas*). However, the many records received from the general public are currently in need of validation and this would be a valuable job for the KBRG.

### **Proposed relationship with other organisations**

**BSBI** - We would be a source of information for **BSBI** which has offered the group pages on its website and can help with plant identification via its panel of referees, though it was suggested that plant identification would usually be a job for Geoffrey Kitchener.

**KMBRC** - We will be a source of data for KMBRC, who is prepared to offer a data-sharing agreement for free access to all KMBRC held data. We would need to work out how we treat a record as acceptable and how we can verify KMBRC plant data. The liaison would be fruitful for both organisations.

**Kent Wildlife Trust** - With many KWT members, volunteers and employees present, the chairman said that there was a mutual interest in sharing records of conservation interest, in monitoring rare plants and developing recording skills. The ensuing discussion turned on the desirability of avoiding duplication of our recording activities, bearing in mind that KWT not only looks after reserves, but also monitors some 600+ local wildlife sites. There are also sensitivities given that many of these sites are on private land. It was agreed that we would need to liaise with KWT regarding our access to site information and KWT monitoring programmes if we are to avoid duplicating records. The chairman had already begun that process for liaison.

**Wild Flower Society** - With some members present, it was agreed that a recording group would not be in competition with the WFS local branch or its activities. There were various comments from those present to the effect that WFS had an important role to play in encouraging beginners and producing tomorrow's botanical experts.

**Kent Field Club** - The chairman explained that although it has a recording emphasis, KFC has a wide natural history interest and records from its field meetings are passed on via individuals and not from the Club as a whole. His annual report of interesting Kentish plant records from KFC members, published in the KFC bulletin, would in future be more widely based, since a county report would best extend to what the recording group see, including what we verify for KMBRC. In discussion, it appeared that some KFC members' plant data did indeed reach KMBRC.

**Other recording groups** - The chairman is in touch with Mark Spencer, plant recorder for the London Natural History Society (**LNHS**) with whom he will liaise, and also with the **Sussex** Botanical Recording Society (**SBRS**), especially regarding coordinating border recording. Contact with **Surrey** is outstanding. Sue Buckingham said she enjoys membership of SBRS, which formed in the 1960s, and which now has about 160 members, a good percentage of whom are active recorders. It undertakes publications such as Sussex Rare Plant Register, and recording for a general flora is close to completion. It holds regular field meetings and Sue hoped that the Kent group would also progress successfully. SBRS would value joint meetings, especially on our shared border.



### **Area to be covered**

The chairman spoke about the use of vice counties, which were fixed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and county boundaries, which change all the time. He explained that West Kent vice county substantially includes the London boroughs of Bromley, Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham and there are differences along the borders with Sussex.

Botanists have had varying views on the merits of either, and the chairman suggested that the group should cover the administrative county of Kent plus any part of the vice counties of East and West Kent that extend beyond, but that prioritisation is likely to entail taking a limited interest in metropolitan West Kent.

Subsequent discussion suggested that changes to at least some of the administrative county boundaries were relatively infrequent; but such views as were expressed favoured the use of vice counties. The chairman offered to email information as to the route of vice county boundaries to anyone who requested.

### **Recording priorities**

**General surveying** involves listing everything in a site or square, destined either for a Flora or for general updating of records and looking out for trends. The chairman considered its priority only middling, as we will have excellent tetrad records when Eric Philp's *Atlas* is published this year, so there is no immediate urgency to update. However, looking forward over the next ten years, there would be a need to update, and the chairman has made a start.

He also recommended one kilometre square rather than tetrad general recording for the group, adding that any records from 2010 onwards would be grouped in a new date class on BSBI website maps and these identify trends. BSBI is using mistletoe as an example by updating its website distribution map with 2010 records. He therefore invited anyone to send him Kentish mistletoe records this year to pass on to BSBI.

**Noting just interesting plants** is something which the chairman suggested we might be doing anyway and requires no special prioritisation— the recording group would provide a means of early sharing and passing on of records to BSBI/KMBRC.

**Rare plant register compilation** should be the priority since, although we have excellent tetrad records, the rarest plants require fuller records of location, population size, etc. The chairman showed the Sussex register (now out of print) as a model. He offered to email a copy of his consultation document on establishing a Kent rare plant register to anyone who asks.

A draft list of rare plants would appear with the newsletter reporting the meeting and group members could adopt some of those plants listed, with a view to finding, or re-finding them and recording information on their status for the register. The chairman emphasized that this was something to which any member could contribute.

In discussion, the proposal was welcomed, and it was suggested that it be extended by making the register a rolling document kept up to date, available to group members. The chairman said he was happy to co-ordinate arrangements, seeking old records where practicable to guide current searches, and producing a plant adoption scheme for the newsletter.

For the purpose of the rare plant register, the chairman indicated that we would now need to include recording in metropolitan West Kent, something he had not allowed for in his original register consultations when he was expecting production of a Greater London register.

Rodney Burton explained that the plans for Greater London's rare plants register had been shelved for a variety of reasons including poor recording coverage in some areas and the current Flora of Greater London project. It was felt that, for the group, a Kent rare plants project should be considered a much higher priority in metropolitan West Kent than general recording there.

## **Group operation - communication and activities**

### **Communications**

The chairman envisaged email, to the fullest extent practicable, as being the desired form of communication among group members (at least those who have access to it) in order to reduce costs and administration.

He invited ideas for inclusion in newsletters. There was a request to circulate members' details, and to avoid any data protection issues, this could be sent as a separate list to all members. Eric Philp suggested including keys to Kentish species of plants where the usual Flora keys (e.g. in Stace) are difficult to use because of the number of non-Kentish plants. Eyebrights were an example. This was received with enthusiasm.

A full website service has been offered to us by BSBI.

### **Activities**

Recording meetings would, for a time, be difficult to assemble. The chairman said that he would be out surveying at least once a week and would be happy to liaise with anyone who wanted to join him.

We could also participate in projects or surveys - for example, BSBI requests population details for certain species.

We could run plant identification educational events for recorders on difficult plant groups.

We could envisage working towards publications although the chairman pointed out that, because nowadays it is possible to keep on-line maps up to date, we are moving towards a time where it is becoming less important to have a hard copy publication devoted to plant distribution.

## **3. DECISION ON FORMATION OF GROUP**

### **3.1 It was agreed to form the Kent Botanical Recording Group**

Attendees were invited to confirm founder membership by use of the tear off slip at bottom of the agenda, which had provision for written confirmation that records can be passed on, plus confirmation as to whether names and contact details can be shared with other members.

### **3.2 Development of group, next steps – to be discussed in newsletter.**

Pending the production of a constitution, envisaged to be at an AGM after a year's operation of the group, there was a need for an interim committee to plan activities, although no formal officer roles needed to be filled at this stage. Response to this was limited, presumably through uncertainty regarding the expected commitment. The chairman agreed to continue co-ordination, consulting as necessary, and including in the first newsletter an invitation for assistance.

## **4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Jose Gibbs requested that out of consideration for East Kent members, meetings alternate between Tyland Barn and Brogdale, which has been offered for our use by Dr Hannah Cook of KMBRC.

Rodney Burton thanked the chairman for organising the meeting.

With no further business the meeting closed at 12.40 pm.

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(This summary was kindly prepared by Sue Buckingham.)

Sue Buckingham also writes:

*I am delighted to have been approached to be designate joint BSBI vice county recorder for East Kent, which I have agreed to take on, though at present my considerable travelling and wild flower teaching commitments mean that for the next one to two years I will have only limited time to devote to this position. After that, I expect to be travelling less and spending a lot more time in Kent...*

## ~~~~~

### What would you like to see in the newsletter in future?

We have suggestions as regards material on where to record, what is a vice county, use of record cards, reference books, the effect of Stace edition 3, "probably extinct plants" which might be re-found, and Kentish botanical keys.

Please comment to Geoffrey Kitchener.

Contributions of photos are most welcome (if sent by e mail, 300dpi minimum, please!).

### What would you like to see on our website when established?

We aim to have our newsletters there and an annual report on Kent botanical recording as well as a general account of the group and how to join. Let us have your suggestions.

**Thanks** to Kate Kersey, Sue Buckingham, Miranda and Sarah Kitchener for help in compiling this newsletter.

The following kindly contributed photographs:

Lorna and Derek Holland (*Galanthus nivalis* at Teston, *Althaea hirsuta* at Cuxton, close up of *Orchis purpurea* at Bonsai Bank, forming logo background); Malcolm Kersey (*Viscum album* at Teston); and Judith Shorter (*Agrostemma githago* at Ranscombe farm, *Ajuga chamaepitys* at Ladds Farm, *Scandix pecten-veneris* at Marden).

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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 signed articles; each author is alone responsible for the contents and substance of their work.