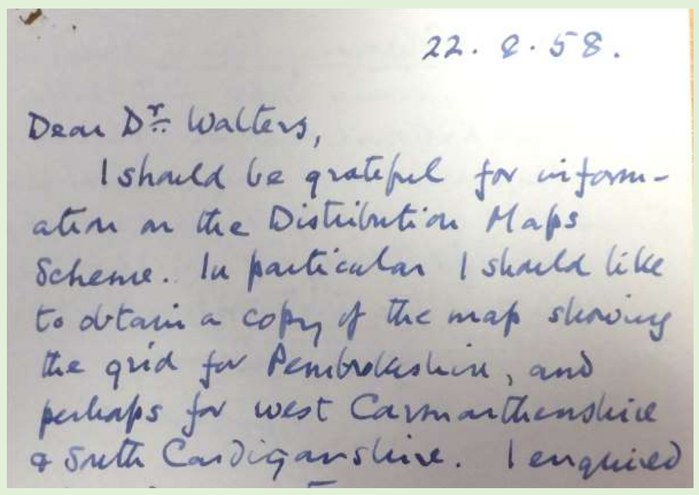
Dear Dr Perring … correspondence in the *Atlas of the British Flora* archive

Much of Frank Perring and Max Walter's correspondence while they were working on the 1962 *Atlas* survives in the CEH archive, thanks to Paul Harding who rescued it from bin bags when Frank decided to throw it away. It provides a fascinating insight into this unique project and deserves detailed study. A few items are illustrated here.

Chris Preston & Oli Pescott, CEH

RECRUITING

Much effort was made to recruit recorders – many fell by the wayside but others became keen botanists. Here Tommy Warren Davis (Pembs.) offers his help



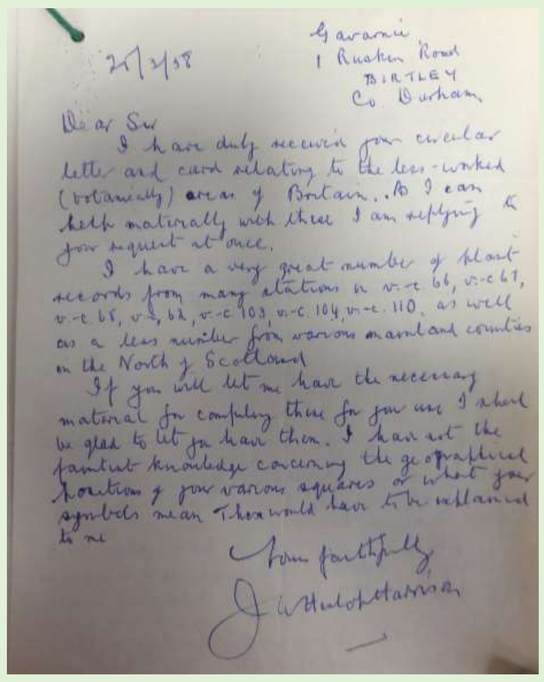
22. 2. 58.

Dear Dr. Walters,

I should be grateful for information on the Distribution Maps Scheme. In particular I should like to obtain a copy of the map showing the grid for Pembrokeshire, and perhaps for west Carmarthenshire & South Cardiganshire. I enquired

EXPLAINING THE GRID

The national grid was new to many – in this letter Prof. J.W. Heslop Harrison says that he "has not the faintest knowledge concerning the geographical positions of your various squares"



25/2/58

Garanie
1 Ruskin Road
BIRTLEY
Co Durham

Dear Sir

I have duly received your circular letter and card relating to the less-worked (botanically) areas of Britain. As I can deal naturally with these I am supplying the information you require at once.

I have a very great number of plant records from many stations in v.c. 66, v.c. 67, v.c. 68, v.c. 62, v.c. 103, v.c. 104, v.c. 110, as well as a less number from various mainland counties in the North of Scotland.

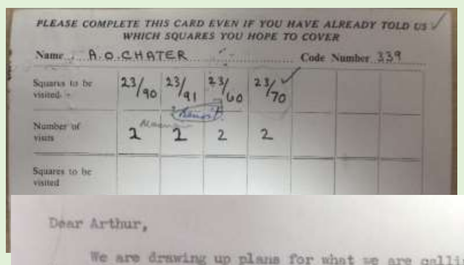
If you will let me have the necessary material for compiling these for you I shall be glad to let you have them. I have not the faintest knowledge concerning the geographical position of your various squares or what your symbols mean. These would have to be explained to me.

Yours faithfully,

J. Heslop Harrison

PLANNING

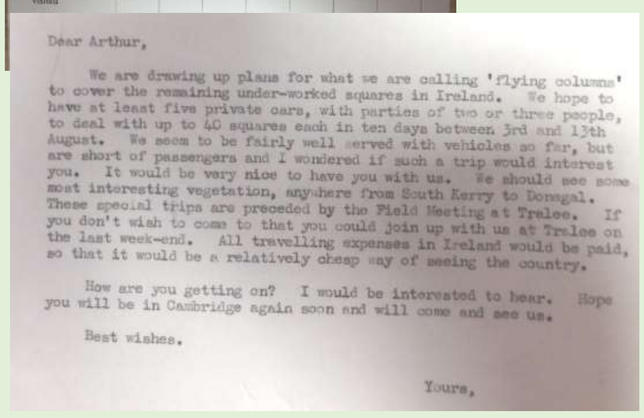
Slips were sent so people could name the squares they could record – Arthur Chater's is one of the few to survive. In Frank's reply, Arthur is invited to join a 'flying column' planned to cover ground in Ireland



PLEASE COMPLETE THIS CARD EVEN IF YOU HAVE ALREADY TOLD US WHICH SQUARES YOU HOPE TO COVER

Name A.O.CHATER Code Number 339

Squares to be visited	23/90	23/91	23/60	23/70			
Number of visits	2	2	2	2			
Squares to be visited							



Dear Arthur,

We are drawing up plans for what we are calling 'flying columns' to cover the remaining under-worked squares in Ireland. We hope to have at least five private cars, with parties of two or three people, to deal with up to 40 squares each in ten days between 3rd and 13th August. We seem to be fairly well served with vehicles so far, but are short of passengers and I wondered if such a trip would interest you. It would be very nice to have you with us. We should see some most interesting vegetation, anywhere from South Kerry to Donegal. These special trips are preceded by the Field Meeting at Trelee. If you don't wish to come to that you could join up with us at Trelee on the last week-end. All travelling expenses in Ireland would be paid, so that it would be a relatively cheap way of seeing the country.

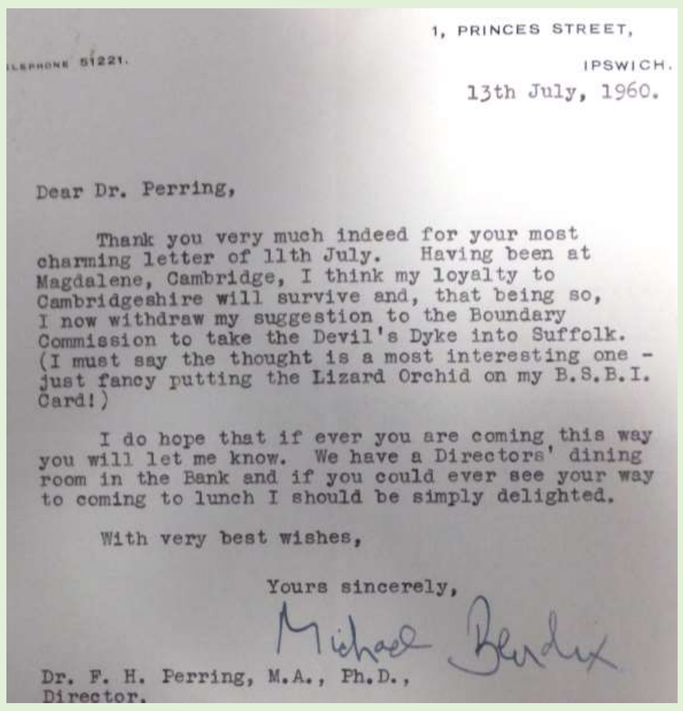
How are you getting on? I would be interested to hear. Hope you will be in Cambridge again soon and will come and see us.

Best wishes.

Yours,

IDENTIFICATION AND CHECKING

Innumerable specimens were sent in and identified. Potentially new v.c. records were queried. Michael Bendix, initially slightly put out by such a query, is so charmed by Frank's emollient reply that he invites him to lunch in the Directors' Dining Room, Barclays Bank (Ipswich)



1, PRINCES STREET,
IPSWICH.
13th July, 1960.

Dear Dr. Perring,

Thank you very much indeed for your most charming letter of 11th July. Having been at Magdalene, Cambridge, I think my loyalty to Cambridgeshire will survive and, that being so, I now withdraw my suggestion to the Boundary Commission to take the Devil's Dyke into Suffolk. (I must say the thought is a most interesting one - just fancy putting the Lizard Orchid on my B.S.B.I. Card!)

I do hope that if ever you are coming this way you will let me know. We have a Directors' dining room in the Bank and if you could ever see your way to coming to lunch I should be simply delighted.

With very best wishes,

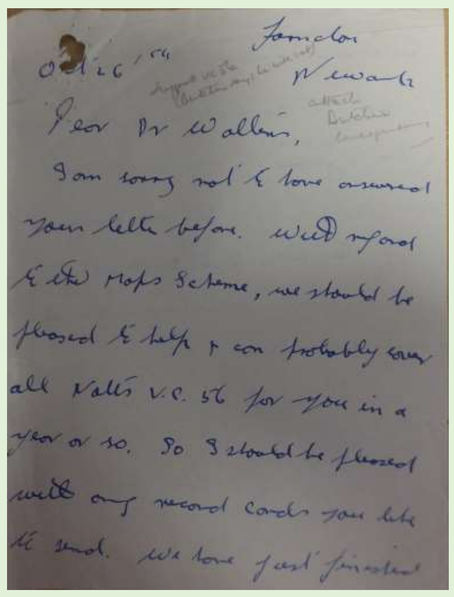
Yours sincerely,

Michael Bendix

Dr. F. H. Perring, M.A., Ph.D.,
Director.

OPTIMISM

R.C.L. Howitt assures Max that he and his wife Brenda "can probably cover all Notts. v.c. 56 for you in a year or so"

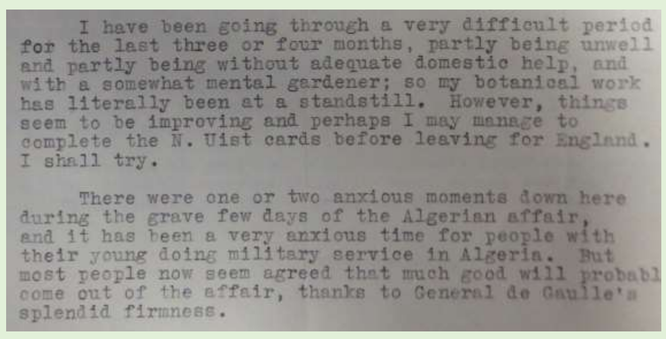


Dear Dr Walters,

I am sorry not to have answered your letter before. With regard to the Maps Scheme, we should be pleased to help & can probably cover all Notts v.c. 56 for you in a year or so. So I should be pleased with any record cards you like to send. We have just finished

EXCUSES

Some did less that they had hoped. Maybud Campbell, writing from Menton, blames illness, inadequate domestic help and "a somewhat mental gardener"

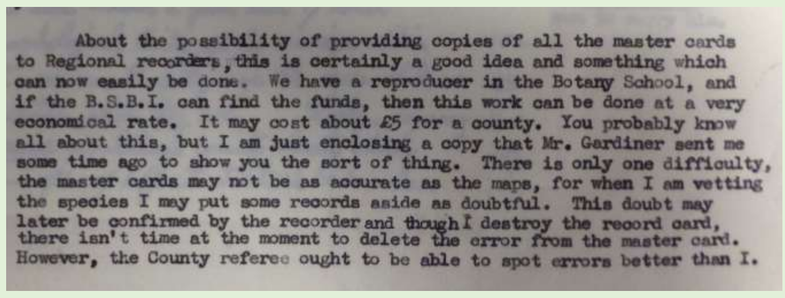


I have been going through a very difficult period for the last three or four months, partly being unwell and partly being without adequate domestic help, and with a somewhat mental gardener; so my botanical work has literally been at a standstill. However, things seem to be improving and perhaps I may manage to complete the N. Uist cards before leaving for England. I shall try.

There were one or two anxious moments down here during the grave few days of the Algerian affair, and it has been a very anxious time for people with their young doing military service in Algeria. But most people now seem agreed that much good will probably come out of the affair, thanks to General de Gaulle's splendid firmness.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

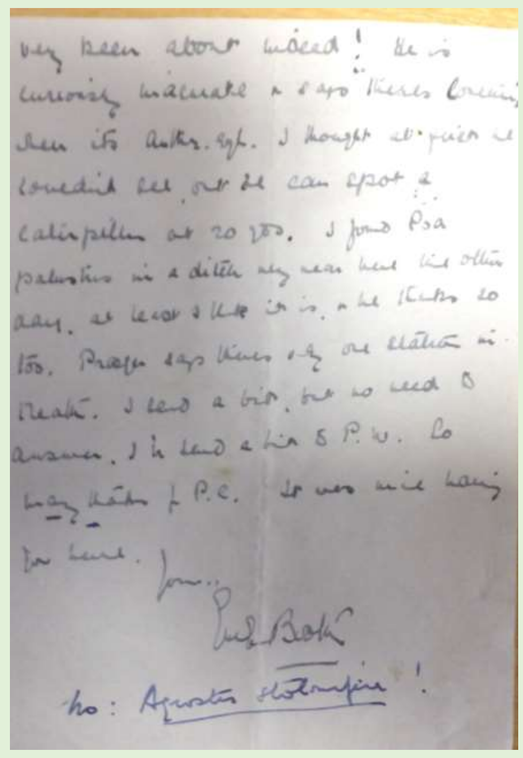
When David Allen asked for copies of cards, Frank says that "we have a reproducer in the Botany School" and the work can be done at a cost of £5 a county



About the possibility of providing copies of all the master cards to Regional recorders, this is certainly a good idea and something which can now easily be done. We have a reproducer in the Botany School, and if the B.S.B.I. can find the funds, then this work can be done at a very economical rate. It may cost about £5 for a county. You probably know all about this, but I am just enclosing a copy that Mr. Gardiner sent me some time ago to show you the sort of thing. There is only one difficulty, the master cards may not be as accurate as the maps, for when I am vetting the species I may put some records aside as doubtful. This doubt may later be confirmed by the recorder and though I destroy the record card, there isn't time at the moment to delete the error from the master cards. However, the County referee ought to be able to spot errors better than I.

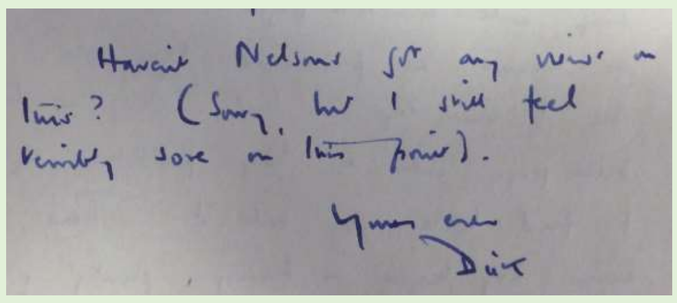
GOSSIP

Evelyn Booth reports that Prof. J.W. Heslop Harrison is "curiously inaccurate" in the field and "a nice old man but my goodness how he talks and how slowly he eats, intolerable to a gobbler like me"



PUBLICATION

Asked for his opinion on the title page, Dick David ended his letter "Haven't Nelsons got any views on this? (Sorry, but I still feel terribly sore on this point)". He must have hoped to secure publication for C.U.P.



Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland

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NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL