



English Botanical News

No.5

2024 July



Taraxacum agg. (**Dandelion**), Surrey [Kathryn Killner]

Contents

From the Editor	3
News from the BSBI President	4
News from the CfE Chair	6
News from the England Field Meetings Secretary	8
New BSBI staff: James Drever (Data Support Officer)	10
New BSBI staff: Sam Thomas (England Officer)	12
The Committee for England (CfE)	15
Chair's report for 2023	16
England Officer's report for 2023	18
Field Meetings Secretary report for 2023	18
Annual Meeting 2024 minutes	21
Annual Meeting 2024 talks	24
Recorders' Meetings, Preston Montford	31
Recorders' Zoom meetings report	63
Botanical contributions to Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Ambrose Baker)	63
Vice-County reports for 2024	65
Project LORE	135
Common abbreviations used in the Newsletter	136

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. Contributions are welcome. A printable booklet version of the pdf is available on request.

From the Editor:

This issue is rather later than planned due to my involvement with the Recorders' Meeting and Annual Summer Meeting, not to mention my VCR activities in Cambridgeshire and more general recording activities in Flintshire and Shropshire. Summer holidays for several contributors then further delayed production. Now if we had an editor... Does anyone want to volunteer?

Many of the illustrations used to provide colour and background, including the cover photograph, come from the annual BSBI photographic competition, and these are noted by PC. I have only used those that were clearly taken in England (slightly subject to my knowledge of geography), but there are many other wonderful images in the [online album](#).

Thanks are due to the photographers and compilers

who put this together. Other illustrations come from speakers or participants in events.

The format for this issue of EBN is similar to those of previous issues, with news from various members of the committee; reports of the annual meeting, Recorders' Meetings and Zoom meetings with recorders; the England VCR reports and an article on Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Together they show that a huge amount of botanical investigation is being carried out across England. The real question is whether politicians will use the evidence that we provide? One way of making sure that they do take some notice is simply by writing to your local representatives pointing out issues at a local level. As they want your votes they will listen.



Fraxinus excelsior (Ash) at
Nethercote, Banbury,
Oxfordshire [Lisa Phipps] PC

Jonathan Shanklin

News from the President: Micheline Sheehy Skeffington

A busy year has passed. After the Atlas launches and the Annual Spring Meeting (ASM) in Killarney, I resolved to try to attend as many meetings as I could. Living in the west of Ireland, it's not feasible to attend single-day field meetings and, as I've resolved not to fly for climate reasons, I am so grateful for zoom, so that I can attend Trustee meetings and where possible, committee meetings. But I am also going to several main meetings in person.

The BSBI has grown enormously since the 1980s when I was given the honour of VCR-ship. Even before that, as fresh Botany graduates, we attended BSBI outings and benefited hugely from the knowledge of our mentors. It was a close-knit community, with outings often attended by people coming from Britain, sharing their knowledge.

But now members are very numerous and we get to meet less people from further afield. Hence my resolve to attend as many field meetings as I can outside Ireland.

The ASMs are one great way to see new habitats and species as well as meeting new members with local expertise. This year's one in Guernsey was a huge success and a delight. We were made so welcome by La Société Guernesiaise and led by them to wonderful sites, the highlight for many being the Orchid Fields, some owned by the Société, where *Anacamptis laxiflora* (**Loose-flowered Orchid**) was a huge hit. As in Killarney, there was great camaraderie, the experts generous with their knowledge, the local BSBI members also guiding us to the best areas and explaining about management. I met many members new and old – including a great bunch from Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney and Sark.



Micheline and others at the opening ASM meal. [Tim Rich]



An orchid field visited during the ASM
[Micheline Sheehy Skeffington]

What struck me was just how different the Channel Islands, like the Isle of Man, are from Britain, each with their own governance and, never having been in the EU, requiring their own conservation designations. We tend to think in insular fashion, so it's eye-opening to see how things are done differently in the different BSBI countries and regions. I found even by attending some of the country committee meetings that each region has its own approach.

I am also attending the Welsh AGM – neatly dovetailing into the one-day Somerset outing to the Mendips region. As well as exploring places new to me, I hope to meet more members and perhaps gain views as to what they feel works and what might need attention in the ever-growing BSBI of 2024.

But for now, I would urge everyone to make a point of attending meetings 'outside their comfort zone' to learn a wealth more about our collective flora, but also about our widely diverse membership and regional ideas. And that means crossing not just borders but seas!

[Micheline Sheehy Skeffington](#)

News from the CfE Chair: Jonathan Shanklin



I made a short visit to Guernsey in the autumn to give some talks about climate and ozone. There was not so much in flower then!

The reason this newsletter is late is because of my heavy involvement with the 2024 Recordors' Meeting and the Annual Spring Meeting that was held in Guernsey. Plans are already underway for 2025, with a Recordors' Meeting at Juniper Hall in Surrey in April and an ASM in Scotland. These are excellent opportunities to meet up with other botanists and to learn from them.

As Chair I have tried to attend all the meetings of the other Country Committees and the three Standing Committees. The Country Committees all show very different approaches and it is helpful to share experiences and appreciate concerns. It is surprising given the benefits that it brings, though perhaps understandable, that I am usually the only representative of other committees who attends. Members can find summaries of all the Committee meetings along with their full minutes on the [BSBI Governance page](#) [password required].

VCRs also said that they would welcome a regular opportunity to meet to discuss any technical issues, so I've tried to arrange approximately quarterly Zoom meetings. These are not closed shop meetings and so referees and other major recorders are also invited. If you might be interested in taking part do let me know and I'll add you to the invitation list.

In my role of VCR for Cambridgeshire (v.c.29) I've continued with many of the activities mentioned in the last issue. The publication of Atlas 2020 has changed the status of quite a few plants (Nationally Rare, Nationally Scarce), so some modifications were required to the county Register of Plants of Conservation Concern. A further modification is required to

include some of the plants listed in the Atlas as being in substantial decline in Britain. The list has some surprising members – for example there isn't much shortage of *Sinapis arvensis* (**Charlock**) in Cambridgeshire. I was also surprised to see the inclusion of *Fallopia convolvulus* (**Black-bindweed**), but I've not seen that much of it in the field margins so far this year. The distribution map possibly suggests that it is doing better in the north of the county than in the south and I've mostly been visiting southern locations.

Thanks go to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter. I would particularly like to acknowledge the VCRs, who make such a big contribution to the work of the BSBI. David Broughton (Hunts), Bob Hodgson (N Devon), Martin Rand (S Hants) and Kevin Walker (NW Yorkshire) have all retired from the role. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new England VCRs: Helen Ball (Staffs), Nick Aston

(IoW), Nevil Hutchinson (W. Sussex), Pat Doody (Hunts), Cesca Beamish (Worcs), Tom Ward (Worcs), Andree Dubbledam (IoM), Lindsay Pyne (Alderney), Will Harford-Fox (Guernsey), Pam Turner (Guernsey), Peter Bullard (Cumbria), Ruth Eastwood (East & West Sussex), Anna Dudley (Warwickshire), April Webb (Warwickshire), Laura Bointon (Cheshire) and John O'Reilly (South Northumberland). Pete Stroh handed over the reins of England Officer to Sam Thomas on April 1st. Thanks are due to Natural England for their support of a full time England Officer.

There are also the many photographers, whose images of plants in England, submitted to the BSBI photographic



The Chair mowing part of the British Antarctic Survey's conservation meadow. Plants like *Betonica officinalis* (**Betony**) and *Succisa pratensis* (**Devil's-bit Scabious**) are doing well here as they are allowed to seed before being mown.

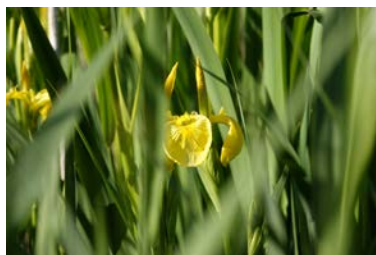
competition, are scattered throughout the newsletter, often near a mention of the relevant county.

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.

News from the England Field Meetings

Secretary: Mary Dean

The field meetings season is going along well and several national meetings have run successfully. Starting in March, Mark Duffell ran a joint meeting with the [Wild Flower Society](#), a field-based introduction to conifers workshop. This was in Shropshire, suitable for beginners or those wanting to learn more about this group.



Iris pseudacorus (**Yellow Iris**),
Steart Marshes [Lorraine Hill]
PC

During March, Mark Spencer ran the first of his field meetings in Middlesex, this one around Islington Streets, followed in April by his second at Ruislip Woods. All the Middlesex meetings welcome beginners and are joint with [London Natural History Society](#). Later in April John Richards, assisted locally by Richard Aisbitt, ran his tenth long weekend devoted to the study of the genus *Taraxacum* (Dandelions). This specialist meeting was in North and South Wiltshire, combining both training for *Taraxacum* enthusiasts and recording to add to our knowledge of the distribution of these species.

I always think May is a lovely, and busy, month for botanists. Trees and grassland are a fresh green, many plant species are flowering or in bud, the inflorescences of most grasses and sedges are showing. I'm sure many of you have been out with your local group [Local Botany – Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland](#). National field meetings to enjoy in May included the Annual Summer Meeting on Guernsey, organised by

a team including VCRs Helen Lichfield, Pam Turner and Will Harford-Fox; Honorary FMS Jonathan Shanklin, and staff members Julie Etherington, Louise Marsh and Sarah Woods. This was followed by a two-day meeting on Jersey, lead by Anne Haden. The third Middlesex meeting at Hounslow Heath took place at end of May.

We had a mix of meetings in June, two of which were two-



A typical local group meeting
[Jonathan Shanklin]

day meetings, something members have requested as a greener option, but requiring more work on the part of organisers and leaders. The first weekend was Colin Pope and Nick Aston's beginners and general recording meeting on the Isle of Wight. Two meetings were held on the second weekend. Jonathan Stone of [Plantlife](#) invited members to visit

their Joan's Hill Farm Nature Reserve, Herefordshire, where he and Stuart Hedley led members to see the species-rich pastures. Mike Porter led his thirteenth, or possibly fourteenth, specialist Sedges training meeting at Tarn Moor and Orton, Westmorland. How many members have enjoyed learning from Mike's expertise and excellent training over the years? I, for one, have greatly benefitted and I appreciate the time Mike has put into making these meetings so successful, and showing members some fantastic sedgey sites.

A new addition to the programme was Ambroise Baker's *Poaceae* walk along part of the Northeast Yorkshire Coastal Path, recording all the grass species they found along the way. This proved very popular with grass enthusiasts and Ambroise has indicated he will run it again next year. The second two-day meeting was on the North Norfolk coast, led by Bob Ellis and Jo Parmenter, another meeting that welcomed beginners and the more experienced botanist.

Looking ahead, there are national meetings in North Somerset, two in Middlesex, and Surrey, and plenty of local meetings close to home.

A big 'thank you' to everyone involved in organising, leading, helping and writing the meeting reports.

I have pencilled in three or four meetings for 2025 from offers made. It is a good start, please start thinking about running a meeting in 2025. Joint meetings with other societies, or a visit to a nature reserve with a talk by the manager are proving popular. Maybe you are interested in a particular group? How about considering

organising / leading a meeting either as training, or similar to the *Poaceae* meeting to walk a route and learn and share knowledge as you walk. Remember, you never know what you will find. If you would like to organise and/or lead a meeting or workshop in 2025, or have an idea that you want some help to develop, please get in touch.



Glaucium flavum (**Yellow Horned-poppy**), Isle of Man
[Andy Law] PC

New BSBI staff: James Drever (Data Support Officer)

I started at BSBI in August last year, so you could say I'm not really a new member of staff anymore but on the other hand, I'm definitely still learning about how things work. I'm very grateful to be here and to be able to introduce myself to you all.

A bit about me. My role at BSBI is primarily focused on technology and data, and my interest in technology started in

earnest aged eleven with a ZX Spectrum home computer, as it did for quite a few people of my generation. I spent the following few years learning how to code, mostly writing computer games.



Anemone nemorosa (**Wood Anemone**), Cumbria
[Neil Forbes] PC

I then got very interested in American Literature, and studied that for a while at Aberystwyth University, before going back to computers aged 28 when I needed a 'proper' job.

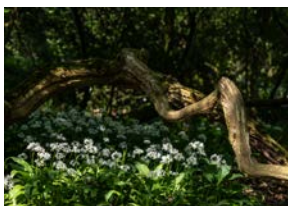
After a few years working in commercial and academic environments, I was very lucky to find a job, as first Web Development Officer and eventually as Head of Digital, at the Field Studies Council. Lucky because it allowed me to pursue my twin interests in nature and technology. When not in front of a screen, I tried to spend as much time as possible in the natural places I love: Parsons Bridge near Aberystwyth, the Long Mynd in Shropshire where I now live, and pretty much anywhere in Orkney.

After fifteen years I moved on from FSC to make my own small company, Careful Digital, where we worked on some pan-European Erasmus+ projects (including encouraging primary school pupils to write stories about the climate crisis and 16-18 years to get involved with biomimicry) before joining FSC. We were also privileged to work with Shropshire Botanical Society on their [online flora database](#).

BSBI has been doing incredible work with data for a while now, led by Tom Humphrey. The DDb is a wonderful resource. My role is to support that work, providing guidance, training and support, and to bring some of my web development and data experience to the BSBI's online presence.

The main thing I've been working on since joining is the '[docs site](#)'. The docs site attempts to bring together all the bits and pieces of guidance about using BSBI's key systems (the Ddb

- building on the manual originally written by Andy Amphlett, and the new recording app) and put them in one, easily searchable location on the internet. We've also incorporated the content on MapMate written by Martin Harvey and Martin Rand. The 'docs site' gets updated regularly. The DDb has evolved over the years, and contains many features that possibly only its creator, Tom, knows about – as I find out about them, and that



Allium ursinum
(**Ramsons**),
Lincolnshire
[Karen Mason] PC

tends to happen quite a few times a week, they are added to the site.

I've also really enjoyed working on the 'Capsella' platform to support the BSBI Identiplant course. I am very much a beginner botanist, so I've learnt a lot reading through the course content as I was working on the platform! I've also relished getting involved with the BSBI's main website, hopefully bringing some of my experience working with the web over the last twenty five years.

Please do [get in touch](#) if you have any questions about BSBI data or systems, or if you have any feedback about the 'docs' site. I'm very much here to help.

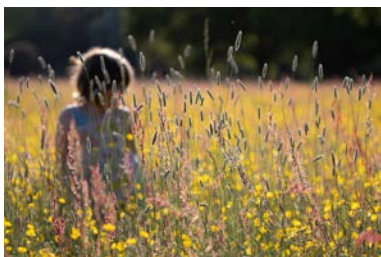


Mentha aquatica
(Water Mint),
Leicester,
[Lindsay-Anne
Heald] PC

New BSBI staff: Sam Thomas (England Officer)

Since I started as BSBI England Officer in April, I thought I'd take this opportunity to properly introduce myself to those of you I haven't yet met in person. My background is in field botany as well as entomology. My interest started in childhood in North

Wales, where I learned a lot of my botany at BSBI meetings, including attending multiple Glynhir recording weeks in Carmarthenshire and square-bashing in my home county of Caernarfonshire. Living in such a wet and mountainous region, I quickly developed a particular interest in alpinism and pteridophytes. Some of my favourite botanical memories from this time



Ranunculus acris
(Meadow Buttercup), Sussex
[Jen Fellows] PC

include scrambling the cliffs of Cwm Idwal, Cwm Glas Mawr, and

Ysgolion Duon in search of alpine, and collecting and counting the chromosomes of *Dryopteris affinis* taxa in Ceredigion with Arthur Chater and Ken Trewren.

My first professional work was as a freelance consultant, including conducting arable plant and heathland surveys, before I joined the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology for a season on the Countryside Survey. After this, I secured a seasonal job surveying Irish semi-natural grasslands with Botanical Environmental Conservation Consultants. I returned to this job over the summers for several years while studying Plant Biology at Aberystwyth University.



Daucus carota subsp. *carota*
(Wild Carrot), London
[Sarah Vaughan] PC

Working for BEC allowed me to explore some amazing habitats, from the mountains of Kerry through the wetlands along the Shannon and the machair grassland of Donegal, as well as countless dull rushy fields.

After earning a degree and an MPhil at Aberystwyth, I moved south to Oxfordshire, where I worked as an environmental consultant for a few years. During this time, I secured my Level 6 Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC). I then joined the Natural History Museum to work on the Urban Nature Project at the Angela Marmont Centre for UK Nature. This involved providing ecological advice on the sensitive redesign of the wildlife garden at the museum, as well as developing eDNA and other methods for urban biodiversity monitoring. After a great four years at the museum, I was delighted to join the BSBI earlier this year.



Verbascum thapsus
(Great Mullein), Branton
[Mary Breeds] PC

Over the years, I've taken an interest in a wide range of species groups and habitats, including the obligatory early phase of bird obsession and a period when I mainly focused on moths. Recently, I've been developing my knowledge of Diptera (true flies) and have been active in the Dipterists Forum, attending recording meetings and publishing new UK species in their journal. Throughout, plants have remained a core interest, and I've enjoyed botanising across



Discovering a whole new world, Jersey [Alli Singleton] PC

the UK and Ireland. I've always been a bit of a twitcher and have recorded 1,970 vascular plant species and stable hybrids in the UK and Ireland to date. I'm looking forward to my 2,000th plant, which may be an alpine jewel in the Scottish mountains or an odd casual on a Portsmouth pavement.

I've very much enjoyed my first few months as England Officer. Attending field meetings and meeting VCRs and other recorders has been a particular highlight. I plan to visit as many meetings as possible over the remainder of the season. I'm also working on improving data flow into the DDb and onto the NBN, and on identifying VCR support

needs. I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage all the England VCRs to get in touch with any queries, requests for help, or just for a chat about support needs or a puzzling or interesting find. I'll do my best to help with any problems, and if they're beyond me, I'll try to find the right person to assist.

I would also like to thank Peter for all his work as England Officer prior to my starting and for his invaluable support in



Cakile maritima (Sea Rocket), Cornwall [David Steere] PC

helping me find my feet in the role. Finally, but most importantly, I'd like to thank all the VCRs who are doing such amazing work. I hope you're having a botanically productive season and that I'll get to meet all of you over the coming months.

The Committee for England 2024 – 2025

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)

Martin Godfrey (Referee)

Anne Haden (VCR for Jersey)

Chris Metherell (VCR for North Northumberland)

Jo Parmenter (Secretary of S&D)

Fred Rumsey (Referee)

Thomas Ward (co-VCR for Worcestershire)

Lizzie Cooke (Plantlife Representative)

Steve Little (Wild Flower Society Representative)

Alex Mills, Alex Prendergast,

Mags Cousins (Natural England co-Representatives)

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



Calendula officinalis (**Pot Marigold**), Enderby
[Lindsay-Anne Heald] PC

has to hold at least two meetings a year, but they can take place by Zoom. If 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 14 by Zoom, and if you have any suggestions for the Committee to consider do get in touch with the Chair.

Annual Report for 2023 from the Chair of the Committee for England: Jonathan Shanklin

The fourth England Annual Meeting was held via Zoom in



Dianthus gratianopolitanus
(Cheddar Pink)
[Patricia Gilroy] PC

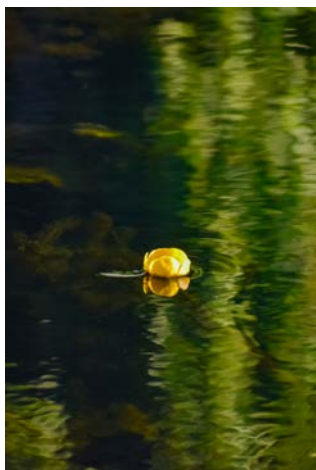
2023 February and attracted a good attendance. Thanks to the efforts of Mary Dean in coordinating them we had a good range of field meetings across the country. A second Recorders' Meeting, in 2023 October, was well attended by recorders from England, with representatives from other countries also taking part.

Following the Recorders' Meeting it was suggested that it would be nice to have quarterly meetings by Zoom, so I organised one in November and these will be repeated during 2024. An intensive set of meetings for

England recorders was held via Zoom in 2024 January; these are a good way of engaging with VCRs and recorders who are no longer able to get out and about. On this occasion referees were also invited. The fourth 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.



Nuphar lutea (**Yellow Water-lily**), Colchester Castle Park
[Elena Tataru] PC

The launch of the Plant Atlas 2020 in England was an exciting affair, although in the end the Cambridge and Newcastle events had to remain separate. Thanks are due to both the British Antarctic Survey and the Great North Museum: Hancock for hosting them, and to all those who helped to make sure that everything ran smoothly. Those members who were not able to attend in person could listen in to the Cambridge talks. Perhaps most impressive after the Atlas itself were the cakes.

I was delighted to hear that Natural England is providing funding for a full time England Officer, initially for a year, and look forward to working with the post holder to progress matters in England.

Future meetings include the Recorders' Meeting at Preston Montford in April, which is especially targeting those who want to get started in recording and the Annual Summer Meeting in Guernsey in May. Even further ahead we hope that the new England Officer will help run a general meeting in 2025.

Jonathan Shanklin

Annual Report for 2023 from the England Officer: Pete Stroh

I have mostly been active in my Science Officer role, particularly doing work on the GB Red List. The England Officer role will become a new post, funded by Natural England, from April 1 with funding allocated for one year. The closing date for applications was February 11, and interviews took place on February 20. I have emailed 15 VCRs over the transfer of a first tranche of records to the NBN. There are, so far, only a very small number of sites/species that VCRs asked to be obscured; most were related to regionally or nationally rare orchids. I have also been advising a student on a project to monitor the flowering and seed set of *Tephrosia integrifolia* (Field Fleawort) at Knocking Hoe.

Pete Stroh

Annual Report for 2023 from the England Field Meetings Secretary: Mary Dean

It is with pleasure that we look back on another successful season of BSBI England Field Meetings in 2023 and look forward to the 2024 programme. A big 'thank you' to everyone involved in organising and leading these meetings, and to landowners and managers for inviting us onto their reserves. I would also like to thank those who put on local meetings and encourage local networks and recording.



Echium vulgare (**Viper's-bugloss**), East Sussex
[Susan Greig] PC

Fifteen of the sixteen meetings on the programme were held in 2023. The first meeting, Introduction to Conifers led by Mark Duffell,

had to be cancelled due to the unexpected heavy snowfall in early March, and Mark has kindly offered to run it in March this year.

Looking back at the other 2023 meetings, in April John Richards and Sarah Lambert ran a *Taraxacum* training and recording weekend in Northamptonshire. In May there were four meetings, all welcoming beginners: first was one of Mark Spencer's Middlesex meetings, this one at Victoria Park and Hackney Wick; next was Roger Smith's South Devon meeting from Scabbacombe Head; then Jonathan Shanklin's meeting for beginners at Hobson's Green, Cambridge; and at the end of the month a rare opportunity to visit the chalk downland of Sidbury / Silk Hill area, part of the Salisbury Plain Training Area (Wiltshire), led by Richard Aisbitt, John Moon and Sharon Pilkington.

The first of five meetings in June was Mike Porter's



Clematis vitalba (**Traveller's-joy**), Broadstairs,
[Rachael Ludbrook] PC

popular Sedge training day, this time at Tarn Moor and Orton (Westmorland). The next two, both on 17 June were Mark Spencer's meeting at Rammey Marsh (Middlesex), and a new venture, a successful joint meeting with Royal Entomological Society at their Nature Reserve at Daneway Banks (Gloucestershire), a site for the Large Blue butterfly as well as botanical and conservation interests. The following weekend Plantlife

welcomed members to their Deep Dale Nature Reserve, Sheldon, Derbyshire, led by the manager Andrew Kearsey. The first of two *Rubus* recording weekends spanned end of June and into July, led by Rob Randall and Astrid Biddle, in Hertfordshire.

The second weekend devoted to *Rubus*, based around Darlington (County Durham) and led by David Earl, was the first of three meetings in July. Next was a meeting at site of the old Rufford Colliery, Nottinghamshire, led by Mark Woods and David



Armeria maritima (**Thrift**),
Cornwall
[David Steere] PC

Wood, followed by Monken Hadley Common (Middlesex) led by Mark Spencer.

In August Mark Spencer ran his fourth meeting of the season for BSBI, at Syon Park, Middlesex. The final meeting of the season was at Wallasea Island, Essex, managed by the RSPB, led by Sven Wair.

Looking forward to the 2024 meetings, there are currently 16 meetings (21 days) in the programme.

Eleven (13 days) are general meetings, many welcoming beginners. There is plenty to choose from for those living in the

more southern parts, where a high number of BSBI members live (thanks to Sarah Wood for supplying vc breakdown by numbers).

Mark Spencer has very generously offered to lead six meetings in Middlesex, one a month starting in March (Islington Streets), through to August (Yiewsley and Cowley Peachey), with Ruislip Woods, Hounslow Heath, Syon Park (different areas to 2023) and Trent Country Park in the intervening months. In June we have a couple of two-day meetings, something some members have requested as more eco-friendly. Colin Pope and Nick Aston are holding one on Isle of Wight in early June, and Bob Ellis and Jo Parmenter have a North Norfolk coastal meeting later in June. Also in June, Plantlife have offered a visit to Joan's Hill Farm Plantlife Nature Reserve in Herefordshire, led by Jonathan Stone. In July, Helena Crouch is leading a meeting at Priddy Mines & Stockhill, Mendips, in North Somerset. In August, Isobel Girvan of Surrey Wildlife Trust is showing members around part of Chobham Common, Surrey, managed by the WLT.

There are five specialized / training meetings (8 days). Mark Duffell has rearranged the cancelled 2023 Conifer workshop in Shropshire for March. John Richards is leading his tenth *Taraxacum* weekend, this year in Wiltshire (April). Also in the south, North Devon, in June, is the annual *Rubus* weekend, led by Rob Randall and Bob Kirby. Also in June, a new offering, Ambroise Baker is leading a Poaceae walk on the Northeast Yorkshire path and Mike Porter is offering a repeat of his overbooked 2023 Sedge meeting in Westmorland, mainly to accommodate those who missed out in 2023.



Senecio viscosus
(**Sticky Groundsel**),
Orford Ness
[Andrew Platt] PC

It is never too early to be thinking about holding a 2025 meeting and members and vcs are invited to get in touch if you are interested in organising or leading a meeting. A couple of people have already expressed an interest in running a 2025 meeting.

Mary Dean

England Annual Meeting 2024 February 25

Draft Minutes of the 5th AGM

1. The Chair, Jonathan Shanklin, welcomed 95 members and supporters to the meeting. There was no secretary, but the meeting ran as per the agenda, with no questions from the floor.
2. The meeting held a short period of silence in remembrance of deceased members resident in England: Chris Page, Elizabeth Elliott, David Allen, Mary Fry, Nigel Mussett, Lizzie Print, Elizabeth Clark, David Nicolle, Paul

Heath, Alec Bull, Dr. R G Chaytor, Peter Cox, Mr. J Middlehurst, Brian Bonnard.

3. Apologies were received from Lynne Farrell and Astrid Biddle.
4. The minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting (tabled at appendix 1) were accepted as correct.
5. Matters arising: Plant Atlas 2020 was launched successfully with very enjoyable events at Cambridge and Newcastle.
6. Jonathan Shanklin was re-elected as chair for a final three year term of office. Martin Godfrey (who had previously served on the committee), Mary Dean (Field Meetings Secretary), Anne Haden, Chris Metherell, Jo Parmenter and Fred Rumsey were re-elected to the committee. David Morris stood down from the Committee and was thanked for his contributions. The chair mentioned that Mary Dean was looking for someone to take over the England Field Meeting Secretary role from the 2025 EAM. This role is as an administrator / coordinator and doesn't need any plant id skills; it is largely computer-based. The chair also mentioned that there was opportunity for a secretary and editor for the EBN. There were around 65 members voting and all committee members were elected *nem. con.*
7. The England Officer Report from Pete Stroh was tabled at appendix 2 (see above). The chair noted that interviews for a full-time England Officer had recently taken place and an announcement was expected soon.
8. The Chair's Report from Jonathan Shanklin was tabled at appendix 3 (see above). There were no questions.
9. The Field Meetings report from Mary Dean was tabled at appendix 4 (see above). There were no questions. Mary



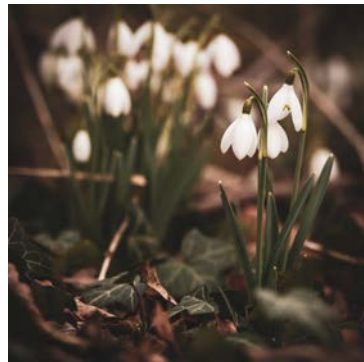
Dactylorhiza praetermissa
(**Southern Marsh-orchid**),
Devon [Grace Perry] PC

Dean was thanked for her work as England Field Meeting Secretary.

10. The Chair noted that CfE had organised a further Recorders' Meeting at Preston Montford in April, which was particularly targeted at prospective new recorders.
11. AoB. Congratulations were given to Rosemary Parslow on the award of the Wildlife Trusts' Christopher Cadbury medal and to Lindsay Pyne for her Marsh Charitable Trust Unsung Hero Leadership Award. See <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/nature-heroes-recognised-lifelong-dedication-wildlife-and-wild-places>
12. It was agreed that the 2025 Annual Meeting should again take place by Zoom on February 23 at 2pm.
13. The AGM closed at 14:20.

The meeting was then treated to a keynote talk from Daisuke Kurose (CABI) on the biological control of alien plant species. This was followed by a short break, following which Geoffrey Hall spoke about how trends in Atlas 2020 are demonstrable at a local level. The meeting concluded with a Chair's address. Mary Dean introduced the Chair and thanked him on behalf of the members for all the work he does for the BSBI. She then asked him to speak about

What I record and where (not just plants). These talks were written up in detail for EBN and are available on the BSBI web page. The meeting closed at 17:00 with thanks to all the speakers and to Tom Humphrey for hosting the BSBI Zoom.



Galanthus nivalis
(**Snowdrop**), North Cliffe
Woods [Rachael Dunn] PC

Jonathan Shanklin
Acting Secretary

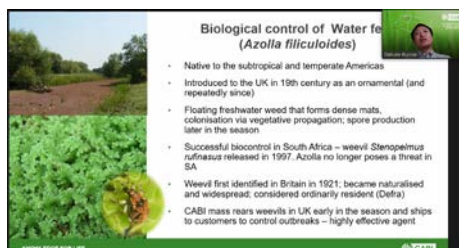
England Annual Meeting 2024 talks

The keynote speaker was Daisuke Kurose from [CABI](#). Daisuke is a molecular biologist and plant pathologist working on the biological control of weeds using fungal pathogens. He has written over 40 papers.

CABI is the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International, which is an intergovernmental organisation established by a UN treaty. It has around 450 staff worldwide; it addresses issues of global concern and publishes information. It maintains a [compendium of invasive species](#). In the UK CABI works on pathogens and insects. It has two licenced quarantine facilities. Daisuke introduced the concept of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), which have an economic cost of £1.7 bn per year in the UK.

There are two main approaches to biological control: using agents is the classical method and using a mycoherbicide (“killer” fungi) is more recent. The classical approach using agents has a history of more than 100 years and is “safe” as the agents are highly specific. Any non-target effects do need to be reported for transparency. The CABI work is non-commercial and for the public good. Establishing a control programme takes time – around 15 years. He showed two examples using different agents: a weevil and a rust. The use of biological control is becoming more frequent. Controlling aquatic species is seen as more important by DEFRA.

Azolla filiculoides (**Water Fern**) is regarded as “ordinarily resident” by DEFRA, but commercial customers want it controlled. It spreads by vegetative mats, with spore production later in the season. A weevil is a good agent and is being reared for commercial customers. Its use saves some £10 m per year with a 50:1 cost-benefit ratio.



There are four classical biological control programmes active in the UK: *Reynoutria japonica* (**Japanese Knotweed**) was introduced in the 19th century and is regarded as one of the world's 100 worst INNS. Control using a psyllid started in 2015, but the first release didn't establish. A climate matched strain of the psyllid was released in 2021, though this prefers *Reynoutria x bohemica* (**Bohemian Knotweed**). CABI would like to know of "good" sites for the plant for trial releases. They are looking at a leafspot pathogen, but there is a risk of non-target infection. Use of a mycoherbicide might be possible.

Impatiens glandulifera (**Himalayan Balsam**) is the tallest



Ailanthus altissima (**Tree-of-heaven**), Cambridge [Chris Preston] PC. This is an invasive species in Cambridge and has earned the alternative name of **Tree-of-hell**.

annual in Europe. Release of a rust is ongoing, but it could take 5-10 years to become established. CABI work with local action groups and landowners to monitor progress using an app. The rust has spread around 100 m from release sites.

The UK biotype of *Crassula helmsii* (**New Zealand Pigmyweed**) is probably from Australia. It is difficult to control using herbicide or mechanical methods. A gall mite, which attacks the flowers is used, though it is not robust to heatwaves and frosts. They are looking for additional agents from its native range.

A weevil to control *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* (**Floating Pennywort**) was

released in 2021. When infected the plant suffers stunted growth and poor winter survival. Again they are using local groups to monitor spread, which has been over 150 m.

The audience asked several questions. One concerned emerging INNS and species such as *Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora* (**Montbretia**) and *Cotoneasters*. CABI meets with DEFRA to

discuss the next targets. A comment from Roy Vickery noted that the emerging shoots of *Reynoutria* are edible and were widely eaten by children as “sally rhubarb”. A second comment said that a population had been eradicated by cutting emergent shoots over an 11 year period. Another questioner asked about the links with climate change, which could affect which species invade.

There was then a short break, after which the talks resumed with one from Geoffrey Hall, who is one of the trio of VCRs for v.c.55 (Leicestershire). He spoke about how trends in Atlas 2020 are demonstrable at a local level. Geoffrey began by giving a resume of the Atlas project. He had looked at two habitats in v.c.55: grassland and marsh. Following the Atlas work every hectad in the county had at least five well recorded tetrads and it was quite fun completing this objective.

Several grassland species show severe decline. Decline of *Ononis spinosa* (**Spiny Restharrow**) and *Cruciata laevipes* (**Crosswort**) is probably a consequence of grassland loss and poor management, particularly of road verges. Nitrogen enrichment may affect *Potentilla erecta* (**Tormentil**) and *Campanula rotundifolia* (**Harebell**). *Succisa pratensis* (**Devil's-bit Scabious**) and *Rumex acetosella* (**Sheep's Sorrel**) are possibly declining for other reasons. [*Succisa* is a late flowering species and it is spreading in the British Antarctic Survey's (BAS) small conservation meadow in Cambridge. I think this is because it is allowed to flower and set seed before that area of the meadow is mown.] There have been some gains, for example *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (**Pyramidal Orchid**) and *Ophrys apifera* (**Bee Orchid**).

In marshes *Valeriana dioica* (**Marsh Valerian**), *Oenanthe fistulosa* (**Tubular Water-dropwort**) and *Carex acuta* (**Slender Tufted-sedge**) were

always uncommon, but are declining. *Jacobaea aquatica* (**Marsh Ragwort**) is suffering from the loss of wet grassland and the effects of drainage.



Silene flos-cuculi (**Ragged-Robin**) and *Cirsium palustre* (**Marsh Thistle**) are also declining through drainage. No marsh plants have increased.



Cirsium palustre (**Marsh Thistle**) is also declining in Cambridgeshire, but a plant appeared in a damp city lawn in 2021. [Jonathan Shanklin]

Many aliens have appeared: *Cochlearia danica* (**Danish Scurvygrass**) and *Puccinellia distans* (**Reflexed Saltmarsh-grass**) along road verges, *Alchemilla mollis* (**Garden Lady's-mantle**) from garden escapes, *Crassula helmsii* (**New Zealand Pigmyweed**) and *Symphytum x uplandicum* (**Russian Comfrey**).

Helminthotheca echioides (**Bristly Oxtongue**) has shown a major increase and is in nearly every hectad. Very new arrivals in the urban setting include *Laphangium luteoalbum* (**Jersey Cudweed**) and *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (**Four-leaved Allseed**). *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* occurs at a couple of sites, where it might possibly be native, whilst *Bolboschoenus maritimus* (**Sea Club-rush**) is on the banks of the River Soar. *Poa infirma* (**Early Meadow-grass**) was first noticed when recording caravan sites.

In answer to a question about what was lost with the creation of Rutland Water, Geoffrey noted *Carex paniculata* (**Greater Tussock-sedge**), which had been rescued from its original marsh home, but the donor site was then destroyed when a new bypass was put through it. There were new arrivals such as *Littorella uniflora* (**Shoreweed**) in part compensation.

Mary Dean then introduced the Chair to give an address on “What I record and where (not just plants)”. The Chair began with some childhood recording, first of plants in a book of pressed flowers at primary school, but then on to recording train and bus numbers. When the family moved to Cheshire, close to the local parish

church, an interest in bell-ringing began. Recording which churches he had rung at gave a total of over 2800, but this was less than half way to the number of churches with bells. Trips for the British Antarctic Survey had taken him to some interesting places: Stanley Cathedral had bells and he had done some botanical recording whilst in the Falklands, including finding a new species, *Plantago coronopus* (**Buck's-horn Plantain**), which had been brought in on the tyres of military vehicles. The tastiest plant there was *Rubus geoides* (**Native Strawberry**). Cape Town was sometimes a staging post for the Antarctic and a short stay gave time to ring at the Cathedral and visit the



Rubus geoides (**Native Strawberry**)

Botanic Gardens. Ringing at Christchurch Cathedral in New Zealand was not possible thanks to the earthquake, but it was a delight to find *Silene gallica* (**Small-flowered Catchfly**) growing as a weed in a churchyard.

St Benet's church in Cambridge is his "home tower" and there was a first county

record of *Campanula carpatica* (Tussock Bellflower) on a chest tomb in the churchyard. English change-ringing involves changing the order of the bells in a mathematical pattern and with six bells 720 different orders are possible. If this is repeated seven times a full peal is rung, taking about three hours. He had rung 584 such peals and 1033 quarters, which are recorded in diaries and the weekly publication *The Ringing World*. Cricket also involves keeping records and he played for the BAS team for many years, producing the annual "stats". One year he managed to come top of the batting averages, largely by being not out in the majority of his innings. One proud moment was taking a hat-trick in a local league match.

Another strand of interest was amateur astronomer, with various branches

requiring record keeping. When possible he made daily counts of the number of sunspots on the solar disk, even taking his small telescope to Antarctica. Sometimes other features were noted, with the planet Venus crossing the Sun on one



Recording sunspots in Antarctica

occasion and more recently a partial solar eclipse by the moon. Some stars change their brightness and Jonathan showed several examples, where his observations had been included in graphs showing the variation. His main astronomical interest is the visual observation of comets and he acts as the British Astronomical Association's visual observations co-ordinator. He gave examples of some comets that he had observed and showed how it was possible to use observations to predict possible future brightness. There might be a bright comet in the autumn!

On the professional side he had recorded ozone amounts in Antarctica and analysing the

observations made by colleagues had led to the discovery of the Antarctic ozone hole. He was also responsible for climate measurements in Antarctica, but showed an example from closer to home, where average minimum



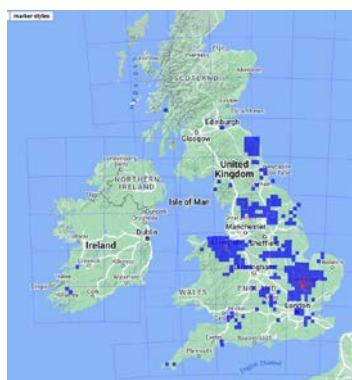
Comet Halley from Antarctica in 1986

temperatures had risen more than average maximum temperatures. When later questioned he said that this could have consequences for plants species, as for example continual

growth of grass through the winter could adversely affect other species.

In the biological world he made records of ladybirds and liverworts. The latter gave some statistical headaches as most bryologists also record mosses and so this distorted analysis of recorder effort. It was now time to turn to plant recording and Jonathan showed a few areas where he had been recording in the last few years, all of which had habitats not present in his own vice-county. He illustrated several species that were relatively common in Cheshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Shropshire, but extinct in Cambridgeshire.

Recorder effort in Cambridgeshire was clearly



Hectads with a record made by a Shanklin

concentrated around the city, but the DDb pages sometimes concealed where additional recording would be beneficial. Newly created habitats often produced surprises, with one example being the find of *Trifolium ornithopodioides* (**Bird's-foot Clover**) at the BSBI beginners meeting in 2023. Plotting the number of species from the county Register of Plants of Conservation Concern (RPCC) in each monad showed some of the most diverse areas:

the Nene and Ouse Washes, the linear features of the Devil's Dyke, the Fleam Dyke and the Roman Road, Wicken Fen and the area around Cambridge. Going out with the local flora group often produced new and unexpected records, with examples of *Lysimachia arvensis* (**Scarlet Pimpernel**) as a new monad record from Wicken Fen and *Carex strigosa* (**Thin-spiked Wood-sedge**) from a boulder clay wood.

As a consequence of seeking out under-recorded monads in Shropshire, Alex Lockton had coined the name of a "Shanklin" for any monad with no records. Pursuing some of these in Cambridgeshire had led to the discovery of species on the RPCC. There were still plenty left to explore, with many more monads

having fewer than 50 species recorded from them. Another target for searches was plants on the [LORE](#) list for the county. As something of a precursor to next year's address Jonathan showed a plot of the density of arable indicator species in the county, which highlighted some potentially important sites. As a conclusion Jonathan showed a DDb map showing hectads where he had made records. These covered a surprisingly large part of England from Cornwall to Northumberland.

BSBI Recorders' Meetings
2023 October 6 – 8 and 2024 April 19 – 21
Preston Montford, Shropshire (v.c.40)
Jonathan Shanklin

The second CfE Recorders' Meeting was held at FSC Preston Montford near Shrewsbury, from October 6 – 8. Participants began arriving at lunchtime, well before the nominal "opening time" and groups were soon in discussion until the meeting formally started at 2pm. After an introduction from FSC staff, Jonathan Shanklin gave an outline of what was planned. The first two sessions were devoted to identifying specimens that participants had brought. These were a mix of locally common species that might be difficult for participants from elsewhere, specimens in need of identification and specimens that were genuinely difficult. These were laid out on tables in two classrooms, with the idea that participants would rotate round the tables and then swap classrooms after the tea & cake break. The organiser had optimistically thought that participants would visit all the tables in each classroom, but in practice the plants provided so much discussion that some groups only managed a couple of tables before the break.

People did swap after the break to view a different range of specimens, then everyone reconvened for a summarising of some of the most difficult examples. One of these was a sedge brought by Ian Bonner, who had made sure that we had to use vegetative identification by removing the flowering spike. Some got to the correct answer of *Carex depauperata* (**Starved Wood-sedge**), which had been given to him when he lived in Anglesey

and had taken some with him when he moved to Gloucestershire. Despite being rare in the wild it seemed to do well in gardens and several people took some of the rootstock away with them to try their hand at growing it on. Jonathan had images of an unusual grass he'd found in a newly created marshy area near Cambridge, which Alan Leslie had then identified as *Beckmannia syzigachne* (**American Slough-grass**). Another photographic image showed *Erigeron x huelsenii* (*Erigeron acris* x *E.*



Beckmannia syzigachne

canadensis), though was somewhat blurred due to wind. Others had also brought *Erigeron* specimens, both pressed and fresh, and it was interesting to compare them, with one which had rather smaller florets proving to be sterile and therefore possibly the hybrid between *E. canadensis* and *E. sumatrensis*,

though this is not listed in the DDb.

A non-spikey Holly had given some debate – was it *Ilex aquifolium* (**Holly**) or *Ilex x altaclerensis* (*I. aquifolium* x *perado*)? The fact that it had berries along with leaf-mines, suggested that it might well be the former. Another of Jonathan's "difficult" species was a strong smelling mint, that some thought might be a *Salvia*. He had brought one of those, *Salvia hispanica* (**Chia**), as well, but this was in fact the Calamint that is illustrated in Plant Crib and broadly keys out as *Clinopodium calamintha* (**Lesser Calamint**), though specimens gathered from two different locations did smell different.

After the summarising, participants adjourned to the bar for a quick drink before dinner. After dinner Mark Duffell took us down the Montgomery Canal, which was known for a suite of rare or declining aquatic species such as *Luronium natans* (**Floating Water-plantain**), with some parts being designated as SSSIs. Much of the Shropshire



Armeria maritima (**Thrift**),
Cornwall [Kevin Tuck] PC

section had been reopened for navigation and the mix of increased boat traffic, turbulence from propellers and backwash from speeding vessels had led to their loss through poor habitat quality. In contrast many parts of the Welsh section still had their plants, however there was funding for progressive “restoration” and there needed to be care to ensure the survival of the plants. After the talk many returned to the bar for further informal discussions.

The Saturday morning was devoted to computer matters, beginning with the new BSBI recording app. Tom Humphrey began by explaining that it was not a direct replacement for MapMate, but would cover data entry and would run in parallel with iRecord. We would need to use the DDb for analysis and QGIS or the DDb for mapping. The app was a multi-platform tool and he took us



Euphorbia paralias (**Sea Spurge**), Braunton
[Mary Breeds] PC

through its screens. As was the case for all the events, the explanations took longer than expected, so we had an early coffee break, then headed out around the ground to try the app or old fashioned recording cards. It was easily demonstrated that the records quickly got a project workspace on the DDb, though it took a little longer to show that images went through as well. I then did a quick demo to show how records could be downloaded or synced to MapMate, with the downloaded data then easily plotted on a QGIS map. One eagle eyed participant spotted that someone had seen *Epipogium aphyllum* (**Ghost Orchid**) and I spotted *Lolium multiflorum* (**Italian Rye-grass**), both of which had been input to test the system. One point that plotted a long way from the others was a group who had tested the ability of the app to warn when crossing a monad boundary. It did however appear that someone had fallen in the river, showing that grid references are not always quite as accurate as expected.

After a packed lunch we started on the talks. First up was



Neoeversiphe galeopsidis on
Stachys palustris (**Marsh
Woundwort**)

Paul Smith telling us about plant parasitic fungi, mostly of the microfungi form. To spot them you have to walk slowly, and turn over leaves, particularly those that look a bit off. The fungi usually have five stages and often alternate between two unrelated hosts, eg ferns and conifers. Some are rarely found or recorded for various reasons, eg low density. Some are more

frequent than expected from historical records. Wales has a loose network of recorders who have produced a red data list. With a wide range of habitats, the red list is based on extent and is only possible for rusts and smuts. There is a protected species that lives on *Crocus nudiflorus* (**Autumn Crocus**). The Welsh red list has 232 rusts and 78 smuts. There are id guides for powdery and downy mildews. There are other sorts of fungi too, for example *Taphrina*. One is worth looking for on *Lotus* spp. Some species are not recorded because people haven't looked. Many species are very host specific. Paul had started because there are not many vascular plant species in some Outer Hebrides monads and adding rusts seemed worthwhile. He found a new species on *Scilla verna* (**Spring Squill**). Some species have a boom and bust cycle. Chance can play a part in discovery, eg finding a smut on *Silene uniflora* (**Sea Campion**). Some smuts grow on plant roots and there may be some (perhaps many) that are undescribed. [The talk was recorded and is on the BSBI web page, but my failure to correctly screen share means that you can hear the words, and will need to page advance the pdf yourself.]

Our next speaker was Alex Prendergast, who works with the Natural England species recovery programme. He is carrying out work on the genetics of Elms and similar work for threatened species. NE have started issuing grants to new partners, including private estates, Wildlife Trusts and the National Trust. The NE approach on introductions and translocation has shifted and they have produced an English Code of practice. The

flagship example is *Cypripedium calceolus* (**Lady's-slipper**). Anyone can introduce species in the wider countryside, but at a designated site it needs NE consent.

Senecio eboracensis (**York Ragwort**) was found in the



Senecio eboracensis
(**York Ragwort**)

York city centre from the 1970s to 1990s. It arose as a cross between *Senecio squalidus* (**Oxford Ragwort**) and *Senecio vulgaris* (**Groundsel**), which also happened with *Senecio cambrensis* (**Welsh Groundsel**), but at a different ploidy level. Fortunately after it died out in the wild, there were three plants in conservation cultivation at St Andrews, with some seed in

Kew, though it wasn't known if this was still viable. In a trial 98 out of 100 germinated and this was soon bulked up to a jam-jar full. This was released back into the wild in York in February. It flowered over the summer and is now into its third generation. A local team is monitoring its spread. It seems to like the river edge.

Tephrosia palustris (**Marsh Fleawort**) has been extinct in the UK for some 120 years. It is a biennial of seasonally flooded and brackish areas. There is plenty of habitat in the East Anglian fens and the Broads have open sediment banks used for pumping out material from drains. They took donor plants and seeds from the Netherlands. Associated introductions might include *Senecio paludosus* (**Fen Ragwort**), *Teucrium scordium* (**Water Germander**), *Viola persicifolia* (**Fen Violet**) and possibly the Large Copper in a dynamic wetland. Sites where introductions were attempted include the Great Fen (v.c.31), Breckland, a new wetland and the Broads mud pumping lagoons. It is doing well in South Norfolk. It doesn't like the Great



Cakile maritima
(**Sea Rocket**), Norfolk
[Theodore Brook] PC

Fen, because of cattle grazing. We need to understand its niche better.

Arable archaeophytes that are under consideration include *Lolium temulentum* (**Darnel**), *Chenopodium urbicum* (**Upright Goosefoot**), *Bupleurum rotundifolium* (**Thorow-wax**) and *Arnoseris minima* (**Lamb's Succory**), but nowhere in the modern landscape supports them. They are working with farmers to see if a niche is possible. Seed is available if you would like to play with them!

With a short time window available before the tea and cake break, Helena Crouch changed our understanding of Duckweeds. She gave an update of a workshop and talk given in 2019 at the Scottish Botanists Conference. There are now three genera in Britain & Ireland: *Spirodela*, *Lemna* and *Wolfia*. There is not much about them to help with id!

Spirodela polyrhiza (**Greater Duckweed**) is easy to identify as is *Lemna trisulca* (**Ivy-leaved Duckweed**), which “sulks” below the surface. Many *Lemna* are troublesome. *Lemna minuta* (**Least Duckweed**) is not always the smallest, but it is also not bright green. *Lemna gibba* (**Fat Duckweed**) is not always fat and *Lemna minor* (**Common Duckweed**) is not the most common.

L. minor is widest in the middle. Several species go red, particularly in the autumn. *Lemna turionifera* (**Red Duckweed**)



L. valdiviana

has a dark spot by the root, which is often visible on the upper surface and often looks dirty. Papules (little bumps) occur on both *L. minor* and *L. turionifera*, looking like little horseshoe crabs. *L. minor* is over-recorded. *L. turionifera* was first recorded in 2007, but perhaps over-looked. *L. gibba* can be flat, though it is possible that this form is a hybrid

of *L. gibba* x *L. minor* (though the parents are not known to flower here). *L. minuta* is translucent, pale grey-green and uniform in size, with one vein running 2/3 of the length. If a duckweed is brilliant green and very small it may be *L. gibba* in its autumn

form. *L. valdiviana* has now been found in the wild. Its fronds are asymmetric and it can be underwater. Split fronds tend to stick in groups of 3 or 4.

Wolffia are solid little round peas that spread by budding. They are mostly restricted to coastal levels. We used to have just *Wolffia arrhiza* (**Rootless Duckweed**). All sites visited this year were *W. columbina*, except for a few sites that had *W. globosa*. Measure a budding plant for size to determine which you have. *W. columbina* is a two tone frond when looked at from above, whereas *W. arrhiza* is one colour. The deciding feature is stomata, but these are difficult to count. We may never have had *W. arrhiza*, which is a plant of nice ditches, whereas *W. columbina* is perhaps more tolerant.

Other species currently in Botanic Gardens and garden centres may escape and are worth looking for. We then adjourned for tea and cakes.



Tamus communis (**Black Bryony**) [Richard Mabbutt]

Following the tea break we had three shorter talks, which were all recorded, first from Richard Mabbutt on his “Basal Project”. A Facebook group that he was on asked questions about “what’s this plant” based on basal rosettes. Tim Rich suggested that he should create a resource to help with identification. He went ahead and now has 600+ images in the resource which

uses Stace 4 names. By design, it does not include submerged aquatics. There is an equivalent for Italy, but not elsewhere in Europe. Some rosettes needed marking in order to go back and establish the identity when they flowered. Some photos need replacing and images would be welcome. Ideally these should be taken in the wild and include a ruler for scale. Juvenile leaves are shown if there is no rosette. To select plants to include he whittled down 25,000 DDb taxa to 2,500. There is a list of found and wanted taxa. It has an easily searchable index. A comment was made that the NHM has herbarium sheets of seedlings and cotyledons which might be of use.

Mark Spencer that told us about a project that he has been working on over the last 18 months to compile a London RPR and axiophyte list. The London area is fairly complex as it has numerous boundaries with VCs, LRCs, admin areas, LNHS etc. The first problem is that London's official list of Plants of Conservation Concern is outdated as over are extinct or were never present, and others of concern are not included. He



Umbilicus rupestris
(**Navelwort**) [Mark Spencer]

uses the IUCN categories and local scarcity to select species for the list. It would be helpful to be able to use historical descriptions of frequency or scarcity in order to help estimate decline. He was using the listing as a kick start for the next Flora of London. Botanically, some parts of London are more important than others, for example the borough of Richmond. 187 species are now extinct, 15 are questionable and 156 are NT or above on the GB/ERL. Several hundred more LC are in trouble in the region. He then took us through a few examples.

Maianthemum bifolium (**May Lily**) was questionably RE but its native status was uncertain. *Umbilicus rupestris* (**Navelwort**) is NT locally and has about ten sites. It is also an axiophyte (ax) for vegetated walls. *Sonchus palustris* (**Marsh Sow-thistle**) was VU in London, RE in v.c.21 and ax for rivers. *Saxifraga granulata* (**Meadow Saxifrage**) was VU in London, EN in v.c.21 and ax for lowland meadows. *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (**Adder's-tongue**) was NT in London, VU in v.c.21 and an ax for lowland meadows. *Turritis glabra* (**Tower Mustard**) was CR and an ax for brownfield grassland.

He had cross-mapped the ax species with SINC (the equivalent of LWS) sites and these showed a good correspondence. There are about 700 ax species for Greater London. *Nymphaea alba* (**White Water-lily**) was often over-recorded for the garden hybrid. Some species are arriving as part of global trade, for example *Urtica membranacea*. *Filago vulgaris* (**Common Cudweed**) is a bit of a conundrum as it is in decline in



Sisymbrium irio (**London-rocket**) [Mark Spencer]

the wider countryside but becoming a street weed. Although *Sisymbrium irio* (**London-rocket**) is a neophyte it is counted as an x as it is characteristic of London. There are two varieties, one with lemon yellow flowers outside the city and a darker flowered one associated with ancient London such as the Roman walls.

Ken Adams then continued his A-Z of grasses started at the first RM, beginning with a quick resume. *Poa nemoralis* (**Wood Meadow-grass**) is not the only grass in woods – there is *Poa trivialis*

(**Rough Meadow-grass**). *Poa angustifolia* (**Narrow-leaved Meadow-grass**) is often overlooked – it is very fine leaved, like a Fescue. *Poa compressa* (**Flattened Meadow-grass**) is often on concrete, particularly agricultural that has become cracked. It is flat to the top of the flowering stem. *Poa humilis* (**Spreading Meadow-grass**) flowers late and is short and chunky.

Glyceria has cylindrical spikelets whilst *Poa* / *Puccinellia* are more ovate. *Puccinellia maritima* (**Common Saltmarsh-grass**) has much bigger spikelets than *Puccinellia distans* (**Reflexed Saltmarsh-grass**), but beware that *Puccinellia maritima* does reflex when old. *Puccinellia fasciculata* (**Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass**) is quite common on Essex sea walls. *Hordeum murinum* (**Wall Barley**) is so called because it is mousey. It is important to look carefully at the spikelet as there are several other *Hordeum* species. Ken suggested looking at Essex Botany for keys to the Fescues – new growth on *Festuca ovina* (**Sheep's-fescue**) comes up through the sheath. For *Vulpias* it is the shape and relative length of the upper and lower glumes that matters. Some of the *Spartina* species are still present on the Essex coast so don't assume it is *Spartina anglica* (**Common Cord-grass**). *Spartina maritima* (**Small Cord-grass**) grows at the top of the marsh and has smaller flowers and darker

leaves. *Spartina anglica* stamens are much shorter and the ligule has fibres that are several mm long.

Ken then went on to describe some plants new to Essex. The Sandmat *Euphorbia davidii* had been found in a game cover crop and was worth looking for elsewhere. A *Galium* found at two sites turned out to be *Galium murale* (**Tiny bedstraw**) on further inspection after a suggestion from Fred Rumsey. *Trifolium hybridum* subsp. *elegans* (**Alsike Clover**) has fully pink flowers and is more prostrate with smaller leaves and denser veins than the usual subspecies.

There is a Google project to map the habitats of the world at 10 metre resolution, which uses an algorithm to recognise types. It is publicly available at <https://dynamicworld.app/explore>. He had looked at distributions in the light of temperature isotherms. *Fumaria capreolata* subsp. *babingtonii* (**White Ramping-fumitory**) is only found on the Tendring peninsula, which has higher winter temperatures. Landsat 8 has a thermal



Plantago maritima (**Sea Plantain**), Flamborough
[Neil Pinder] PC

imager with 10 metre resolution and shows the heat island effect of London. It also shows that Epping Forest has slightly lower temperatures. Lidar imaging is being used to create 3-D models of individual trees, in for example Witham Wood near Oxford. By estimating the volume of wood it is possible to calculate how much carbon is stored in trees.

After dinner we had a Forum session, which began with a “soapbox” 5 minute talk from Ken Adams telling us why he felt it necessary to resign from the BSBI over the plans for open access to the DDb. Several other southern VCRs were in a similar position. Promises had been made to landowners by him and colleagues that in return for access, records would not be made public. BSBI were not honouring these promises. In addition there was a feeling that some consultants were “mining” data for commercial gain, which put the business model of local record centres (LRCs) at risk. Whilst requiring individual password

protected login would largely resolve some concerns, there was still the issue of tetrad lists being publicly available, as these could still give sufficient information to identify particular features. Jonathan Shanklin pointed out that the situation in Scotland particularly (where there was a right to roam) and the other countries differed from that in England. He said that current plans for DDb access would require all members to login with their own password to ensure traceability. Sharon Pilkington, as a former consultant, explained that CIEEM professional standards require consultants to go through LRCs and if there was evidence to the contrary the consultant should be reported to their professional standards body. What a consultant should do is



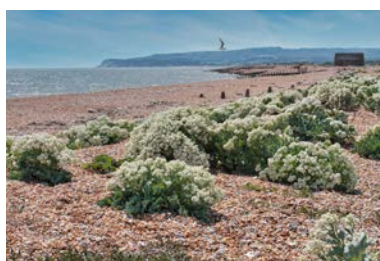
Armeria maritima (Thrift),
Cornwall [Francesca Leslie]
PC

first do a desk study by requesting from the LRC all records of notable species (mostly bats and newts) and boundaries of all designated sites within a km of the site of interest. Mining data from the BSBI would be an infringement of professional standards. In response to a question as to who owns the records, Tom Humphrey said that copyright doesn't exist for a single record. Overall the BSBI hasn't done a good job of explaining how records are handled. Any member who asks is usually given access to the DDb, particularly if supported by the VCR. A possible solution to the tetrad list issue would be to make a list of common species available and then to note that there were also a number of plants on the county RPR (or RPCC) present, without giving the names. This would then force a consultant to go to the LRC for details. There was clearly no easy solution that would satisfy everyone, but a more complex solution may be possible.

A questioner said that VCRs would like help on critical taxa. It would be nice to have structured guidance. Referees do provide help on critical taxa. There are *Taraxacum* and *Rubus* workshops. One on *Ulmus* is needed. S&T will be organising such meetings. Some referees will give determinations from photographs, particularly if they images are produced by

stacking. A workshop on how to stack would be welcome. We need to keep up skills at the higher level as well as teaching beginners. In a way both groups are “special needs”. VCRs need to make use of referees, though it was recognised that experts are not always the best teachers.

The BSBI has an aim of taking botany to more people by organising more meetings in towns and cities. I asked the question whether such events should be organised by the BSBI, local groups or interested individuals. The President had started urban botany in Dublin during the fuel crisis as no travel was needed. The meeting thought that events were probably best



Crambe maritima (**Sea-kale**),
Rye Harbour Nature Reserve
[Barry Yates] PC

organised on a regional or local basis. It was noted that many local groups did organise meetings, which were not being included in strategic analyses. Indeed many local group meetings were not publicised to a wider audience. Tom Humphrey said that it would be technically possible to include local events in the calendar and

there were plans to enable VCRs to update the web pages as required. As local groups were not necessarily under the control of the BSBI it would require the Trustees to authorise this to progress. [At the S&T meeting on October 10 it was announced that guidance aimed at individuals in local groups on how to run “pavement walks” was being prepared.]

There was a clear desire not to have to travel long distances for one day meetings. Where possible field meetings in two nearby (or relatively so) locations offering different habitats over a weekend would be attractive. A show of hands suggested that only about a quarter of those present were thinking of travelling to Newcastle for the BIBConf (or AEM as it used to be known). Reasons for not attending the BIBConf included cost and time needed for travel, lack of information about local accommodation, car-parking, relative location of the University and travel, and it being only a one day meeting. Lack of hands on

sessions and too much being crammed in were also given as reasons for not attending, even when access was easier such as at the NHM. Moving talks to a half day conference the day before the exhibition, having a half day interactive specimens workshop or holding an excursion would be welcomed. Another option might be to have two BIBConfs, one in the north and one in the south to give more people the chance to attend. BSBI needs to understand why people attend.

The settled weather allowed the initial option of



Looking for *Filago minima* along the track margin

excursions on the Sunday to take place. Four venues attracted all the attention: Nesscliffe Country Park, The Cliffe, Onslow Estate and urban botany. I went with the group to The Cliffe, an area with open heathland, where we opted not to record until we got into the southern monad that the open access site covered. We started off in woodland, but as we climbed up to more open ground found scattered *Filago minima* (**Small Cudweed**) along the track margin. The viewpoint on top had patches of *Erica cinerea* (**Bell Heather**). The group split into two

for lunch, with the President eating sandwiches with those departing and fruit and biscuits with those planning to reach the end of the site. This was duly achieved, and engendered a surge of records thanks to more nutrient rich ground near a cottage. Returning along the eastern margin, Helena spotted some *Melampyrum pratense* (**Common Cow-wheat**) on the track bank. With time passing and a deadline to get passengers to the station the leader started to chivvy the group along, but there was always another interesting plant to discuss. We eventually got back to the cars, then Preston Montford in time to make the transfer to Shrewsbury station.

I think everyone had a good time, and it was amazing how much conversation and learning took place during the few days

we were together. As is often the case, I stopped for a short while on my journey north towards Chester, finding *Conyza floribunda* (Bilbao's Fleabane) on the verge of the A5, and also a monard refind last seen in 1891 - *Tragopogon pratensis* (**Goat's-beard**) – no anther smut though as it was only vegetative.

The 2024 Recorders' Meeting

We returned to Preston Montford for the 2024 Recorders' Meeting, but this time in April, so we had a different range of plants to view. The event was badged as a conference for beginner recorders and it was pleasing to see so many young botanists take advantage and come along. We were fortunate with the weather, and although there was often a cool northerly breeze, it remained dry. My stress levels steadily rose as the date approached, peaking just before the formal start of the event. Thereafter everything ran more or less smoothly, though there are several points to bear in mind for the next Meeting.

As with previous events we started with id tables, and as with previous events most participants only looked at a couple of tables as there was so much to see and discuss. Participants



Participants trying to key out plant species at Preston Montford

ranging from beginner recorders to referees and there was plenty of help on hand to show how to work through keys and hopefully arrive at a possible identification. In a few cases the decision was that it was impossible to come to an identification. Specimens on view ranged from easy to identify and relatively common, through rare

and harder to identify, to impossible (or very difficult) to identify as the stage was just too young. I brought along a lot of specimens, just in case there weren't enough, and others did too,

which contributed to the plentiful supply. An interesting pairing that I brought were *Scandix pecten-veneris* (**Shepherd's-needle**), which was just starting to flower in my garden and *Torilis nodosa* (**Knotted Hedge-parsley**), which was still vegetative. Most people correctly deduced that they were umbellifers, but deciding which was which was harder.

After the tea break, where Preston Montford cakes were enjoyed, we continued with the id tables, slowly building up confidence on finding out what had been brought along. One possible improvement here would be to have some “streaming” so that absolute beginners could be assigned a tutor and just have to confront rather easier specimens. All too soon time was up and we adjourned to the bar before dinner.

For our after dinner forum, there were no specific questions, though I raised a few general questions. I failed to take any notes so I can't remember what they were! We then had a look at the possible future BSBI science projects. “Monthly wildflower walks” were an attractive possibility, and this graded into recording what was on the plants (which might require the use of iRecord rather than the BSBI



Anagallis arvensis (**Scarlet Pimpernel**), Jersey, [Alli Singleton] PC

app) and a repeat of the 2004 BSBI “local change” project. In all cases it would be good to have a systematic methodology in order to maximise the science benefit. I noted that the 2004 project had brought me into botany and the tetrad involved now had over 1000 species known from it, with more added every year. Knowing what the formal methodology misses might also be a useful reference. We thought that for many counties “Summit Floras” was a non-starter, as they had no summits of sufficient altitude. “Aquatic flora” were considered under-recorded, both from the perspective of difficulty in identification (the new Aquatic Plants book is a great help) and in how to get at them. Many river banks are difficult to get at or are protected by brambles etc, or

have steep banks that are risky to descend (I got wet feet doing so last year!). “Priority species surveys” would potentially take people to nice sites and use the existing “threatened plant project” methodology, where everything within a metre of the target species was recorded. This led to discussion of where to find the priority species as historically some were given a centroid position that could be a kilometre or more from the actual site, others were simple misidentifications and arable species are quite mobile. The first stage in assessing “Plants of International Responsibility” would be to decide what the list was. *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (**Bluebell**) was a clear case and easy to identify, but other such as *Callitriche obtusangula* (**Blunt-**



Sedum rosea (**Roseroot**),
Maize Beck Teesdale [Ken
Readshaw] PC

fruited Water-starwort) were less obviously our responsibility and harder to identify. Whilst some counties were having a rest after Atlas 2020, others were enthusiastically recording for Atlas 2040, particularly filling in gaps left in the previous Atlas. We then headed for the bar for further discussion.

The Saturday was devoted to classroom sessions, though for a future meeting we should try and get outside for a practical after tea. We began with James Drever (Data Support Officer) demonstrating the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb), which has opened for members’ access. Around 50% of the participants had used the DDb before at various levels. Even within the first few minutes of the presentation experienced users learnt things they didn’t know! James took the audience through a series of simple queries and showed how they worked and also how to find further information on the [BSBI Documentation website](#). There were lots of questions from the floor and plenty more tips both for and from experienced users. One point was the different levels of access that the public, members and research users would have, with

levels of detail varying both between the countries and between counties.

After a coffee break (and a chance to view [Summerfield Books](#) offerings) we had a



Chamerion angustifolium
(**Rosebay Willowherb**), Devon
[Jamie Buxton-Gould] PC

series of short talks on what various people did as part of their role. This began with Richard Carter, a long experienced consultant, explaining what botanical consultants do. In the main this was to help a paying client to meet their ecological obligations or aspirations. It mostly involved species protected by law, which in the

main were not plants. He had only known two occasions in 40 years where Schedule 8 plants were an issue. The planning process gives rise to about 70% of consultancy work and there were three types of client: the developer, the competent authority (e.g. Natural England) and consultees (e.g. a local authority). Other work came from land managers, both local authorities and landowners (e.g. for rewilding). Finally there was work on Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS on the Wildlife and Countryside Act Schedule 9) and delivery of habitat management. Many botanical consultants will do some teaching work. As a botanical consultant he carries out surveys for various purposes, e.g. for mitigation of development. He might act as an Ecological Clerk of Works. Consultants can apply for research grants. The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environment Management (CIEEM) governs professional competence and has an ethical code of conduct. Most consultancies demand lots of training for their employees. The job is to provide evidence. Consultancies arose in the 1980s, particularly following EU legislation in the late 1980s, which put an onus on the developer. Now Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has a big impact and requires competent botanists at FISC level 4.

Mags Cousins is a Senior Specialist with Natural England (NE), which has three plant specialists along with those for

fungi/lichens and bryophytes. NE provides advice and guidance; input to legislation; review of the Schedule 8 list; applications for licences, particularly those to deal with protected species; development is now a permitted activity; revision of the GB Red List (Pete Stroh is doing this work); national infrastructure projects e.g. HS2; assessing the SSSI network (does the system cover enough of the necessary rare plants and if not propose new ones); run a species recovery programme (with BSBI and Plantlife input); training and capability; occasionally conduct surveys on SSSI. The three plant specialists each cover a broad area of England and couldn't do the job without BSBI records. The Cheshire/Lancashire team did a gap analysis to assess SSSI coverage and discovered that some plants e.g. *Hypopitys monotropa* (**Yellow Bird's-nest**) are often found outside SSSI, so perhaps for such species it is best to work with other partners. Another example was *Cephalanthera rubra* (**Red Helleborine**), where the species recovery programme included research on the required environmental conditions.

I gave a talk on my role as vice-county recorder (VCR) for the old county of

Cambridgeshire (v.c.29), which differs from the modern administrative county, which includes Huntingdonshire (v.c.31) and parts of several other vice-counties. Slides from this session are on the Recorders' Meeting web page. The BSBI has VCR guidelines, but these are hard to find and somewhat daunting, giving little guidance on how to do things. A primary role is to make and collect records,

making sure that they get to the DDb. Most of my records go in through the MapMate software, but in future there will be records from iRecord users and from the BSBI recording app. Some contributors send in records in spreadsheets, which almost always need re-formatting and species names checking before

Mepal Outdoor Centre
Botanical Survey Report
Jonathan Shanklin
(BSBI vice-county recorder for Cambridgeshire)



The iconic 'tepee' of the former Outdoor Centre

A survey report for a
Cambridgeshire site

they can be validated. Other contributors send in casual records as text, sometimes with full details, but some with a vague description. I exchange records with our local environmental records centre (LERC). This has good software for checking site names against their grid references. I provide verification for their records in return. Any consultant should be making use of the LERC as they can add value to the raw records by selecting those that are important, hence the need to make sure that records are lodged with them as well as the DDb. I have created and maintain a simple Register of Plants of Conservation Concern (also known as a Rare Plant Register).

Mine has many plants that are not necessarily rare in the county, but are threatened at a wider level. Some VCRs will write a Flora for their county, but in my case Alan Leslie wrote one in 2019, so it will be a while before an update is required. Many VCRs run a local group or host national BSBI meetings. An aim can be to refind rare plants that haven't been seen for a decade or more, though sometimes these turn up by

accident in a new location. I maintain a web page, which can be updated whenever I want as I have full ownership of it as it sits on my work server. I am the botanical expert on our County Wildlife Sites panel and have had the additional criterion of "Important Arable Plant Area" included in the reasons for designation. On some occasions I tutor small groups, and on a couple of occasions have been commissioned to carry out site surveys. On other occasions I volunteer to carry out a site survey for a landowner if they will give me access. Based on the records collected I have written scientific papers for our local natural history journal: [Nature in Cambridgeshire](#). One thing I am not good at is collecting herbarium specimens, though ideally I



A visit to Trinity College to record their paddock, where the grass is being allowed to grow.

At the left is a band of
Ranunculus cantabrigiensis
(Backs Goldilocks Buttercup)

should for any new species to the county. Finally it is helpful to go to other BSBI meetings such as this one, as you learn a lot.

Martin Rand then spoke about the next level up, the BSBI referees. He was a referee for *Erigeron* (Fleabanes) and also looked after the referee list. Referees know a lot about some particular aspect of botany. They help satisfy members with identification but also check the reliability of records. The person to ask first is your VCR or other local expert; there is also a beginners' referee list in the Yearbook. The taxon referees may be academic world experts or knowledgeable amateurs. They will know the range of variation in species, including from outside Britain, will have an extensive library and access to herbarium collections. Read the Yearbook to see what each individual referee would like – in some cases you can start with a photo, which must show the details required by the referee. If you are sending them material, follow their instructions and agree on who will keep the specimen. Sometime a determination simply cannot be made. The referees are managed by Jo Parmenter who is secretary of the Science & Data committee, with administrative support from Sarah Woods (Fundraising & Engagement Manager). There is a list of groups without a referee [sometimes you can start of with just a little knowledge, but gain it and in the process write a Handbook and become a referee]. Referees are encouraged to write an annual report. All are volunteers, but you can reasonably expect a prompt reply, but do allow leeway as they may be away on an overseas field trip. Do use the system.

Our next speaker was Sam Thomas (England Officer)



Crithmum maritimum (**Rock Samphire**), Devon [Lisa Hopwood] PC

who was very new to his role and this was only his third week in post. It was full time for a year and was funded by NE. The role had previously been filled by Pete Stroh (Scientific Officer), who had one day a week to cover the country officer role. Sam had now taken this on and NE projects were also in his job description. Some of their

requirements overlapped with that of Country Officer, e.g. training and support. A specific task is looking at data mobilisation, particularly to the [NBN gateway](#). He can provide help to VCRs with data upload. He plans to meet people over the spring and summer, including at field meetings (local and national) and by phone or Zoom. Hopefully this will lead to increased support to VCRs along with a couple of papers for NE on their target work.

The final speaker in this session was Lucy Wilson who is a Conservation Officer for the [BCN Wildlife Trust](#). 46 Trusts cover the UK, though they developed piecemeal over time. A lot of (hidden) work goes into working with other land managers. BCN has three teams: Reserves, Research & Monitoring and Wider Countryside. The last can range from small sites to large estates and might involve councils. Landowner attitudes can be variable – some don't care, whilst others are really proud of their site. The team looks at planning applications that might impact sites and Nature Recovery Networks which feeds into the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Her main role is monitoring of County Wildlife Sites, which are non statutory with many based on their botanical interest. Most are privately owned and only 5% don't have a



Plantago lanceolata (**Ribwort Plantain**), Bristol [Penny Insole] PC

botanical criterion in their designation. She has recently revised their woodland species list by checking against the DDb for plants that actually occur in Cambridgeshire woods. She then gave examples of a few sites. One was Werrington Junction on the East Coast Main Line, which had been improved. This site had been selected for the Four-spotted

Moth (*Tyla luctuosa*), which feeds on field bindweed. Network Rail had moved a brook some 50 m as part of the works, but the moth population had been maintained. Another site, "Wildtracks" Activity Park, had its designation expanded to include the arable plant criterion, where the bikes were excellent at maintaining open ground. Another nearby site qualified under a grassland

criterion, but didn't have the necessary management for the arable species.

We ate our packed lunches, mostly around the centre's pond where there was *Menyanthes trifoliata* (**Bogbean**) in flower and then returned to the classroom to hear Martin Rand show us some Leathery Leaves: a look at some genera of broad-leaved evergreen trees and shrubs. He lives in "leafy London suburbia", which was built on former heathland. It has continued to "improve", but retains some old scraps of habitat. There are still many houses with large gardens. During Covid he found that there was a wide variety of escaped species including some from former Hillier nurseries. Some of the plantings had seeded themselves elsewhere, particularly *Prunus laurocerasus* (**Cherry Laurel**), *Quercus ilex* (**Evergreen Oak**) and *Ilex aquifolium* (**Holly**). He developed a workshop that could run via Zoom. Many of the species are not in standard floras, might be cultivars, or hybrids. He started putting together an [id guide](#) and [key](#). Why record them? a) they escape, e.g. *Laurus nobilis* (**Bay**), b) May regenerate where planted and c) might be planted in "wild" places, e.g. amenity shrubbery. They can be fun to identify; Poland is a good help.

The basic features of an evergreen leaf are similar to a deciduous one, but in different proportions. Arid places give rise to Cacti, but most evergreens are from tropical dry or wet forests. Most horticultural species are from Mediterranean climates. We only have a few natives because of glaciation: *Buxus sempervirens* (**Box**), *Ilex aquifolium*, *Arbutus unedo* (**Strawberry-tree**) [where there are arguments that it is an archaeophyte] and *Pinus sylvestris* (**Scots Pine**). Many leathery leaves are similar, so twig features and the arrangement of the leaves provide discrimination. Some features are distinctive, e.g. spines or compound leaves. Some species are not in Stace, but equally some are and hence frequently recorded e.g. *Berberis aggregata* (**Clustered Barberry**). Basically there are two groups of Mahonia



Silene dioica (**Red Campion**), Shepshed
[Abbie Marshall] PC

(now joined with *Berberis*), with the number of leaflets a determinant. *M. x media* is found in the wild in Hampshire. *M. x wagneri* [which has more leaflets and which often overlap] is more common in Hampshire than *M. aquifolium* (**Oregon-grape**), but they can be difficult. Two alien Box species may be present, but *Buxus sempervirens* is very variable – its veins are always closely packed. *Sarcococca* is planted, particularly *S. hookeri* as ground cover. *Photinia x fraseri* is often planted, but probably not fertile. *Elaeagnus* (**Oleaster**) has cultivars and crosses: *Elaeagnus macrophylla* (**Broad-leaved Oleaster**) has no thorns and broad leaves with a white margin and white underneath. *Elaeagnus pungens* 'Maculata' is often planted and its leaves have no teeth and no white margin, but a crinkly edge and lots of brown scales underneath. Their hybrid *E. x submacrophylla* is intermediate in a broad range. *Ilex aquifolium* and *I. x altaclerensis* (*I. aquifolium* x *perado*) are both present. A big Holly has upper leaves that are flat and if there are any spiny leaves it is probably *I. aquifolium*. *I. x altaclerensis* has a few forward pointing spines near the leaf tip. There are also some confusing cultivars. Ideally this section would have been a workshop, but after the talk Martin laid out specimens on tables in an adjacent classroom, and several people did try out his keys. One discovery for me was that *Lonicera nitida* (**Wilson's Honeysuckle**) and *L. pileata* (**Box-leaved Honeysuckle**) are the same thing and should be called *L. ligustrina* (**Box Honeysuckle**).

Our next topic was *Dryopteris* ferns, with Fred Rumsey concentrating on the *Dryopteris affinis* agg. (**Scaly Male-ferns**). Slides from this session are on the Recorders' Meeting web page. They are apomicts and so clonal entities, but they can hybridise with a male crossing with *Dryopteris filix-mas* (**Male-fern**). There is also sexual reproduction. The main species from *D. affinis*, through *D. borrieri* to *D. pseudocomplexa*, with spore and stomata size increasing through the range; the ploidy is 2 - 4. All have a dark patch at the base of the pinnae, which runs through inside the stalk. The referee needs fertile material to make a determination. Fred then took us through some of the parents: *D. oreades* (**Mountain Male-fern**) has glands around the edge of the indusium, which carry through to *D. cambrensis*. *D. wallichiana* is only known from one naturalised site so far; it is

very scaly, including along the pinnae and has dark scales. *D. caucasica* now only grows as far west as Turkey. *D. filix-mas* is common and can grow on walls.

D. affinis, which is a big plant, is less common in the east.



Dryopteris affinis (Scaly Male-fern)

The teeth on the pinnules are fairly small and the veins run to the edge. Most plants are winter green. The indusia are “pinched donuts”. Local forms include *D. kerryensis*, which is a small, neat plant with overlapping fronds. It is scattered in wet locations in England.

D. paleaceolobata matures later than *D.*

affinis, and the pinnules twist and can overlap the stem. The scales are mostly the same size. It is quite widespread. *D. cambrensis* has clustered erect fronds with pinnae at 90° and having a U-shape, with the pinnule at the bottom of the frond stalked. It often has long black patches at the junction. It is mostly found in wetter western parts of England.

D. borrieri is more common in drier parts of England. It has



Dryopteris borrieri (Scaly Male-fern)

a less chunky stem and is less scaly. It is only slightly winter green. There is a flat top to the pinnule, which are uneven in height. The veins stop before the pinnule margin and are often indistinct. There are several varieties: *D. lacunosa* has gaps between the pinnules and valleys between the

teeth. Some forms look closer to *D. affinis*, but are well-toothed

and not leathery. *D. pseudodisjuncta* is mostly found in Scotland and the SW peninsula. There is a V-shaped gap between the pinnules and the indusia have a dark patch in the centre. *D. pseudocomplexa* is closer to *D. filix-mas* but has poorly toothed pinnae and is not known from England.

All of these can hybridise with *D. filix-mas* and the hybrids are always very big plants, bigger than *D. affinis*. *D. remota* is probably extinct. It looks a bit Buckler-fern like, but has the black spot.

We now took an early tea break (though at the specified time as we were running late), accompanied by Preston Montford cakes, which also gave participants a final chance to make purchases with [Summerfield Books](#).

Our final speaker in this session was Ken Adams, who is well known for [Ken's Keys](#) and [Essex Botany](#).



Anacamptis pyramidalis
(**Pyramidal Orchid**),
Sussex [Jen Fellows] PC

He noted that you can produce habitat maps based on satellite multi-spectral imagery. He found that beginners had difficulty with Hubbard, the standard work on grasses, so had produced a new illustrated key in conjunction with Arthur Copping that was based on spikelets and ligules. He has also produced a key on fumitories, which is in a recent edition of Essex Botany. He began with a helpful [grass structure diagram](#) and then went on to highlight some grasses, giving helpful tips; many of these have synopses in the Keys. *Festuca rubra* agg. (**Red Fescues**) and *Festuca ovina* agg. (**Sheep's-fescues**) are simply split by whether

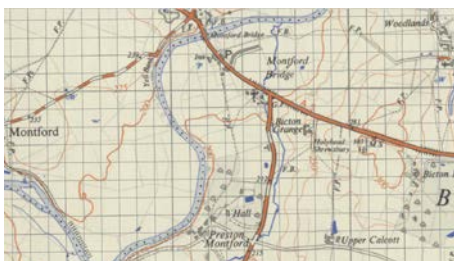
the new shoot comes out at the side or through the middle. *Agrostis canina* (**Velvet Bent**) is only in very acid areas. *Poa infirma* (**Early Meadow-grass**) is now in towns (often around trees) and on verges. *Poa bulbosa* (**Bulbous Meadow-grass**) is another early flowering species and disappears in early summer leaving behind the bulbous bases to regenerate. *Poa angustifolia*

(Narrow-leaved Meadow-grass) has narrow leaves like *Festuca rubra* and may be under-recorded for it. *Poa compressa* **(Flattened Meadow-grass)** has a stem flat up to the inflorescence and was once mainly on walls, but is now often on cracked concrete tracks.

Having taken us through some of the on-line keys, Ken then showed a selection of herbarium sheets, beginning with the distinctive *Polypogon monspeliensis* **(Annual Beard-grass)**, which is now widespread. Several New Zealand sedges are coming in from planted specimens and there is [a good key for them](#). *Agrostis stolonifera* var. *palustris* **(Creeping Bent)** has a long inflorescence and might be mistaken for *Agrostis gigantea* **(Black Bent)**. *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* **(Inland Club-rush)** is the main species that is available for purchase for planting, so is becoming more frequently encountered. *Carex extensa* **(Long-bracted Sedge)** is spreading around the Essex coast. Over 1000 plants of *Carex filiformis* **(Downy-fruited Sedge)**, which has hairy utricles, were found in a field that had been well botanised. It flowers early and may have previously been missed. It is a species from along the Thames. *Carex divulsa* subsp. *leersii* **(Many-leaved Sedge)** is over-recorded because there is a form of *Carex divulsa* subsp. *divulsa* **(Grey Sedge)** with a more compact flower head. It is probably a single gene mutation that divides the two forms and both have a floppy inflorescence. Subsp. *leersii* is stiffly erect with yellowish leaves, and flowers early; it is more often found on a calcareous substrate. *Carex binervis* **(Green-ribbed Sedge)** and *Carex distans* **(Distant Sedge)** are often confused. The latter is a plant of wet places, whereas the former is found on acid, heathy soils.

We then moved on to the session devoted to recording skills, which proved a bit more controversial than I expected, though it was as interactive as I had planned with lots of input from the audience. Slides from this session are on the Recorders' Meeting web page. I began by asking the participants to tell me where "what three words" places might be and how far apart they were. They couldn't, exemplifying that this system is useless for scientific purposes. It was pointed out that the system is also being dropped by the emergency services due to difficulties with regional accents and different pronunciations. An example was

“hers” and “hearse” which could lead you to very different places. Having revealed that the positions were actually in Preston Montford I showed that you could easily tell how far apart they were from the easting. Controversy arose with how I had written the grid reference down. I used the OS convention, which was to use SJ43301435, and was firmly told that some in the audience would like the easting and northing separated as SJ4330 1435. Others then pointed out that splitting like that would confuse many software applications. The compromise was to use the



An old OS 1:25,000 map of Preston Montford – there was no A5 then

splitting in hand-written (or equivalent) material. I then went through a series of map types that are accessible on the [cucaera website](#), which also shows vice-county boundaries, explaining the grid reference system, along with hectads, tetrads and monads.

[Open Street Map](#) is good

for showing paths in urban locations. I then went on to positions, where a key point was the difference between precision and accuracy. Most GPS show the precision of a 10 figure grid reference (*i.e.* 1 metre), but few are actually this accurate in normal use. The fact that earth has an atmosphere and that there are often trees, buildings or landscape features means that 8 figures are the best you can expect and even then only after allowing time for the readings to settle. I demonstrated the effect by showing results from the previous RM where we had trialled the BSBI recording app – a lot of flowers were growing inside the Darwin building! On occasion the GPS may tell you that you are 200 m from where you know you are.

I then went on to the issue of site names. There is often a plethora of different names that are used for the same place and it can be very difficult to know which should be used. For SSSI you can use the DEFRA [Magic Map](#) or you can download shape files for inclusion on your own GIS map. Some administrative areas have maps showing their county wildlife sites, for example

[Telford and Wrekin](#). The name can matter if you are trying to compile a species list for a site. In the past some recorders have attached a site centroid to a site name, but without knowing what site boundary has been used there is a danger that all species will be plotted at the site centroid. This is an issue if the site covers several monads and indeed one site near Cambridge (as yet without a formal designation) lies at the intersection of four hectads. In conclusion I suggested that site names should follow a clear hierarchy (for example Fulbourn Fen SSSI, East Fen; *where East Fen is the management unit, though in this case the SSSI units are different to the management units*) and that records should be assigned to the monad in which they occur. Ideally any recorder should be able to easily find the appropriate site name for the place that they are visiting.

Recorders use a variety of means for inputting records: MapMate (the BSBI supported/recommended software for VCRs), Recorder, local systems, Spreadsheets, the DDb, iRecord (iNaturalist was criticised) and the BSBI Recording app,



This site is Cherry Hinton Pit SSSI, but you will find many other names for it in the DDB

which is nearly ready for release. There are pros and cons for all, but in future many will use the BSBI app, either in desktop form or in the field as an app on a phone or tablet. Many older recorders found smartphones hard to see in bright sunshine and would probably continue to use cards in the field. Cards can be printed on waterproof paper, which

makes them usable in any conditions. I showed a few sample screens from the app, but on this occasion we had no time available to give it a formal trial. iRecord may be best for recorders who also log things other than plants, but at the moment there has been no transfer of records from iRecord to the DDb. This means that individuals have to extract their plant

records from iRecord and send them to the VCR if they are to be used. Some people make records but never submit them, so these might as well not have been made in the first place. Some VCRs have good relations with their LERC and there is a two way flow of records, sometimes with the VCR verifying the botany and the LERC verifying the mapping. When I verify records I first have to edit spreadsheets to a consistent format, then run a computer program that checks species names (one spreadsheet had a mix of Stace II, III and IV names) and then this highlights species that are on the RPCC or are uncommon aliens in the county. It should be possible to run similar verification on the DDb.

A final topic was recording priorities and this will vary from county to county, so there are probably as many as there are



Record a plant
Add a one-off find quickly.

Start a new survey
Enter records for a single site.

Resume survey
Continue from 11.3341 2004-03-21

Add a set of casual records
Enter a mixed set of records from several locations or dates.

The BSBI recording app

VCRs. Efforts could go to: recording for Atlas 2040; targeting monads with no records ("Shanklins") or few records ("Shanklets"); site recording; hunting plants not recorded in a hectad for over 20 years (the LORE project); becoming a taxon expert;

undertaking BSBI science projects. Desk based activities could include: Flora writing (county, regional or site); writing a Handbook; compiling a RPCC.

After dinner Helena Crouch entertained us with an account of the Ferns of Bath, which in part was taken from [an article in the Bath Natural History Society Magazine](#). Ferns are an ancient lineage that originated before flowering plants. We have 65 native species, 35 aliens and 35 hybrids in Britain & Ireland. Somerset has 40/20/6, whilst Bath has 23/9/0. Ferns have their own terminology and a complex life cycle. They need water for sexual reproduction. The shape of the indusia can be helpful for identification, though some are naked.



Primula vulgaris (**Primrose**),
Northumberland [John
Dalrymple] PC

There have been five Floras that include Bath, starting in 1834. The first record was of *Botrychium lunaria* (**Moonwort**), which was seen by Gerard in 1597 and last reported in 1856. Losses have mostly been due to nutrification and management changes. In 1834 there were eight common ferns and five rare ones listed. *Asplenium*

ceterach (**Rustyback**) declined, but is now increasing again. Of the rarer species *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (**Adder's-tongue**) has probably declined. *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* (**Black Spleenwort**) has a preference for more acidic rocks. *Gymnocarpium robertianum* (**Limestone Fern**) has a few sites and was found down a drain in 2023, but this was probably short distance dispersal from a nearby garden. *Cystopteris fragilis* (Brittle Bladder-fern) is scattered.

Four more species were added in 1839 by Babbington. A plant that isn't quite *Polystichum setiferum* (**Soft Shield-fern**) or *P. aculeatum* (**Hard Shield-fern**) is probably the hybrid *P. x bicknellii*, which is probably under-recorded. Then came an increase in pollution from growing industry and the rise of Pteridomania. Probably as a result of garden cultivation, new species have arrived, e.g. *Dryopteris submontana* (**Rigid Buckler-fern**), of which all four fronds were collected so it was then lost. It was probably planted, but had gone after a decade. *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (**Maidenhair Fern**) is another native species that has probably escaped from cultivation as a house plant. *Osmunda regalis* (**Royal Fern**) was probably planted. *Dryopteris affinis* and *D. borleri* are recent additions following their recognition as species. *D. carthusiana* (**Narrow Buckler-Fern**) was a new find in 2015 in an acidic flush. Clare and Mark Kitchen found *Asplenium marinum* (**Sea Spleenwort**) on the basement wall of the Guildhall in 2018. This plant is frost tender rather than a halophyte.

There are a few alien species: *Azolla filiculoides* (**Water Fern**) arrived in 1939. *Pteris cretica* (**Ribbon Fern**) was found in



Primula vulgaris (**Primrose**),
Isle of Wight [Helen Cramp] PC

a couple of basements in 1978 and is now in a few other locations. A *P. multifida* (**Ribbon Fern**) was at first thought to be the same species, but was later re-determined. Other species in this taxon are a variegated *P. nipponica* (**Table Fern**) and *P. tremula* (**Tender Brake**). *P. umbrosa* was found in 2009 and steadily grew until

its basement habitat was done up earlier this year. *Adiantum raddianum* (**Delta Maidenhair**) has a subtly different shape to the pseudo-indusium compared to *A. capillus-veneris*. There are also lots of cultivated; one is *Polystichum tsus-simense* (**Korean Rock-fern**). *Cyrtomium fortunei* (**Fortune's Holly-fern**) also escapes and is tougher than *C. falcatum* (**House Holly-fern**) and often wrongly labelled in garden centres.

We then mostly adjourned to the bar, though a few went to try out Martin's keys on the leathery leaves in the classroom. Sunday was cool and cloudy, but good for our field excursions. Two people decided to record in some of the under-recorded monads east of Preston Montford, whilst the rest went to Loton Deer Park as we had received last minute permission to wander around. The location exemplified the site name conundrum as the designated name is Loton Park and Quarries LWS. The site is an interesting mix of acid and calcareous ground as the Alberbury Breccia, a red sandstone with irregular blocks of carboniferous limestone, formed during the Permian period runs through it. On arrival we split into three groups, each tackling one of the monads. An initial problem was deciding which monad we were starting in as various GPS devices gave slightly different positions. Once into our squares, serious recording got underway, with all the recorders sticking to old fashioned recording cards. Whilst plants were the main focus, two groups noted Violet Oil Beetle (*Meloe violaceus*).

The group I was recording for progressed slowly, finding



Viscum album
(**Mistletoe**) and mist,
Chequers Estate
Buckinghamshire,
[Karen van Oostrum)
PC

many interesting species. Perhaps the first was the contrasting pair of *Myosotis ramosissima* (**Early Forget-me-not**) and *Myosotis discolor* (**Changing Forget-me-not**). Of the latter we only noted subsp. *dubia*, though others found subsp. *discolor* as well. We had several *Potentilla* species, with *P. argentea* (**Hoary Cinquefoil**) on the track and one with a mix of 3 and 5 leaves, which had to go down as *P. x mixta* sens. lat. (*P. anglica* or *P. erecta x reptans*) as it needs to be fruiting to decide which you have (the hybrid doesn't produce good achenes). Moving up the hill we started finding holes in the rock, where the limestone had been dissolved. Down one were fronds of *Asplenium scolopendrium* (**Hart's-tongue**) and

by another Bob Kirby identified *Erophila majuscula* (**Hairy Whitlowgrass**). Reaching the crest we found a patch of *Ranunculus parviflorus* (**Small-flowered Buttercup**) and dropping down to a pond found *Ranunculus peltatus* (**Pond Water-crowfoot**). It was now lunchtime, and with some of the group having to catch trains the majority returned via Preston Montford. A trio in one car continued, adding quite a few more species to the monad list, before reluctantly heading back to Preston Montford. In all the group recorded 183 species from the site. After a bit of tidying up everyone headed their separate ways, but hopefully many will meet again next year for another Recorders' Meeting.

Several people need thanks for their behind-the-scenes input: Sarah Woods for managing the web pages and bookings, Julie Etherington for handling the finance, and Liz Wilcox and the staff at Preston Montford and Mark Duffell for the local

arrangements. We would also not have had anything to talk about without the input from all the speakers.

Recorders' Zoom Meetings

The Chair organised another round of Zoom meetings for recorders (not just VCRs) in January, with a quarterly meeting in April. In the main these meetings cover more technical issues, but there are points of general interest.

One such is that there is now a [new list of Nationally Rare and Nationally Scarce species](#). Members with access to the DDB should be able to access this using the link above.

I did organise a meeting in April, but can't find any written up notes from it. I rather think that making arrangements for the Recorders' Meeting and Annual Summer Meeting rather swamped my intentions to write them up.



Glaucium flavum (**Yellow Horned-poppy**), Gosport
[Cathy Ball] PC

Botanical contributions to Local Nature Recovery Strategy

[Ambroise Baker](#)

Some 48 Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) areas in England are currently writing their strategic plans for the next 3-10 years. These strategies are expected to be used extensively by local authorities planning departments and others, as nature recovery is being pushed forward on the agenda in all parts of society. Writing these strategies is a fantastic opportunity for

botanists and botanical societies to contribute expertise, in particular about the distribution of plant species that are red-listed or of local significance.

For about half of England, these areas coincide more or less with the old Watsonian vice counties, which should facilitate identifying what species are present today or have been present historically. However, for the other half, this work is significantly complicated by a mis-match in boundaries. I have experienced this difficulty when looking at bryophytes, charophytes and vascular plants of nature recovery interest for the Tees Valley LNRS.



Habitat creation in compensation for a solar farm [Jonathan Shanklin]

One key element of LNRS that botanists and botanical societies can contribute to, is when drafting longlists and priority list of species. Interpreting and comprehending the guidance can be overwhelming. However, botanists are in a particularly good position to showcase years of excellent systematic recoding, providing good distributional data, and to apply the methodology outlined in the guidance given that

we have excellent, recent, IUCN-standard red lists, and in many places some of BSBI's rare plant registers.

I am inviting anyone involved as a botanist in drafting elements of LNRS to get in touch with me as I expect that sharing experience could: 1. Make our work more efficient and accurate, 2. Showcase better the value of botanical societies' recording schemes, 3. Provide practical peer-support.

[Ideally a strategy should focus on creating habitat for scarce and declining species, rather than focussing on preserving really rare species. The most threatened group, at least in my area, are the plants of arable habitats, but creating suitable habitat seems very low on the priority list. Ed.]

Vice-county reports for 2023

Thanks to Tom Humphrey and 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. As far as possible I have retained all images from county reports within their report. In this section NCR is a New County Record.

v.cc.1 & 2, [West & East Cornwall](#) French

Ian Bennallick & Colin

In 2023 the total number of flowering plant and fern records for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly topped 2.5 million and now stands at 2,522,023. During 2023, 73,793 flowering plant and fern records were added to the ERICA database of which 60,147 were recorded in 2023. 32,186 records, covering 1274 taxa, were made in West Cornwall (v.c.1) in 2023, and 27,961 were made in East Cornwall (v.c.2) covering 1210 taxa. In total, 143 people contributed flowering plant and fern records in 2023.

Remarkably, 37 new taxa were added to the Cornish list in 2023. They include several historic records from herbaria

(the specimens for *Cistus incanus* (**Hoary Rock-rose**) and *Crepis paludosa* (**Marsh Hawk's-beard**) need checking), two from Barbara Sturdy's notes of a visit to Croggan's Tannery, Grampound in 1984, and nine new to the Isles of Scilly. The majority are alien species and are mostly likely to be casuals.

The Botanical Cornwall Group organised 16 field trips to all parts of Cornwall with one looking at *Salicornia* spp. (**Glassworts**) with Dave Steere, one looking at *Rubus* species in the field with Keith Spurgin and two New Year Plant Hunts.



Spiranthes spiralis (**Autumn Lady's-tresses**), Hampshire
[Roger Forster] PC

Attendance to each meeting averaged around 7 people. Many new and updated records were made and meetings involved lining with the Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Natural England, The National Trust, South West Lakes Trust and the Launceston Parish Wildlife Group.

v.c.1b, [Scilly](#) Rosemary Parslow & Liz Askins.

Liz Askins continues recording species from a couple of bulb farms which she has been visiting regularly. In September I was able to join her on visits to a few farms. I also went to a farm I haven't visited recently to see their organic vegetable enterprise. There was also an opportunity to look at a former site for *Sibthorpia eupaeous* (**Cornish Moneywort**), that was lost when a stream was diverted, to see if there was any prospect of restoration.

I've also continued putting records on the database. We have also started a Facebook page which has engendered a lot of interest and hopefully some interesting reports. Liz is able to follow up some of these locally which is ideal.

I have also contributed lists and species information on a number of Scilly plants to the LNRS project (Local Nature Recovery Strategy) which took a considerable amount of time, far more than the organisers suggested!

The plants of *Erophila verna* (**Common Whitlowgrass**) Liz found in 2022 were ID'd by Tim Rich from Liz's Facebook photos as *E. glabrescens* (**Glabrous Whitlowgrass**) --new to Scilly!

Liz also found a new site for *Spiranthes spiralis* (**Autumn Lady's-tresses**) on Great Ganily, one of the uninhabited islands. She was also able to correct the GR for *Thymus drucei* (**Wild Thyme**) on the same island. The original GR had the plant in the sea!



Lotus corniculatus (**Common Bird's-foot-trefoil**),
Derbyshire [Charlie Fothergill]
PC

v.c.4, North Devon

Bob Kirby, Bob Hodgson

Over ten thousand records have been gathered, twenty-six for taxa new to the vice-county (with a dozen more awaiting confirmation). Over a hundred and seventy-five records involved plants known to be very rare in Devon, most being neophytes.

Bob H has been active mostly within v.c.3 (in which he lives), with a few excursions northward into v.c.4. Bob K's spring recording focussed on LORE targets, with *Stellaria pallida* (**Lesser Chickweed**), *Asplenium obovatum* (**Lanceolate Spleenwort**), and *Helleborus viridis* (**Green Hellebore**) found in previous haunts. Later trips focused on tetrads that had either no significant recording since 2003 or a very high apparent biodiversity loss. These picked up fast-spreading neophytes, and revealed how some apparent biodiversity loss can be an artefact of a tetrad's recording history. His year was rounded off updating lists for a number of suburban areas.



Ailanthus altissima (**Tree-of-heaven**) Found escaping into woodland at Yarnacott by Bob Kirby.



Phedimus kamtschaticus var. *ellacombeanus* (**Ellercombe's Stonecrop**) Found colonizing the doorway sills of some disused garages in Tiverton by Bob Kirby

Supported was provided for a BioBlitz, run by South West Water, and several field meetings were organised for the Devonshire Association's Botany Section.

Visits to recorded sites for *Limonium binervosum* agg. (**Rock Sea-lavender**) have helped to provide a better understanding of the taxa probably present, in the hope of eventually recording them in more detail. Work has also been undertaken with a view to trying to update *Rubus* coverage.

S. Desjardine (of Leicester University) was assisted in his investigation of a distinctive form of *Parapholis* (**Hard-grass**) found in the SW.

A report of *Geum macrophyllum* (**Large-leafed Avens**), took Bob K to Lydford Forest where he found it well established and spreading into adjacent areas.



Mitella ovalis (**Oval-leaved Miterwort**) Found on a verge at Docton Mill by Bob and Stephanie Kirby. Likely to have escaped from adjacent ornamental gardens where it was naturalised in the lawns



Avena nuda (**Naked Oat**)
Found amongst a birdseed
spill assemblage in Tiverton
by Bob Kirby



Betula utilis var. *jaquemontii*
(**Himalayan Birch**) A form
lacking the striking white bark
of most planted examples.
Found amongst *B. pubescens*
(**Downy Birch**) at Brownsam
Woods by Bob and Stephanie
Kirby



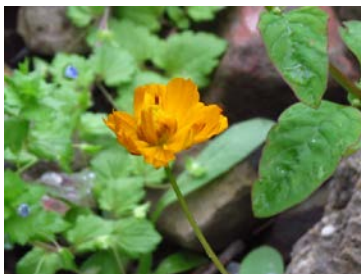
Clerodendrum trichotomum
(**Glory-bower**) Found
naturalizing in a churchyard
and escaping onto a roadside
in Dalton by Bob Hodgson
and Bob Kirby.



Carex comans (**New Zealand
Hair-sedge**) Found as a
pavement weed at Yarnacott
by Bob and Stephanie Kirby.



Cornus sanguinea subsp. *australis* (Dogwood subspecies) Found in several locations (inc. Barnstaple, Tiverton, Okehampton, and Roadford Lake) by Bob Kirby, Stephanie Kirby, and Bob Hodgson, previously unrecorded, but potentially overlooked



Cosmos sulphureus (**Yellow Cosmos**) Found on a mound of excavated sub-soil at Barnstaple by Bob Kirby. It had apparently spread from biodiversity plantings elsewhere on the site



Crataegus x lavalleei (**Lavallée's Cockspurthorn**) Found by Bob Kirby, used for landscaping, in Barnstaple



Eryngium giganteum (**Tall Eryngo**) Young plants found as gutter weeds in Barnstaple by Bob Kirby



Eryngium planum (**Blue Eryngo**) Found as a pavement weed in Tiverton by Bob Kirby and Bob Hodgson)



Laphangium luteoalbum (**Jersey Cudweed**) Diminutive plants discovered in a coach-park at Marwood by Bob and Stephanie Kirby



Malva alcea (**Greater Musk-mallow**) Found as a pavement weed in Tiverton by Bob Hodgson and Bob Kirby



Ligularia fischeri (**Fischer's Leopard Plant**) Found in a green lane near Dolton by Bob Hodgeson and Bob Kirby



Lemna valdiviana (**Valdivia Duckweed**) Found naturalised in a pond at Marwood by Bob and Stephanie Kirby



Malva trimestris (**Royal Mallow**) Found as a roadside casual in Tiverton by Bob and Stephanie Kirby

Campanula rotundifolia (**Harebell**) was found amidst rocks at Yes Tor by David Barden, very rare in v.c.4.

Hypericum hirsutum (**Hairy St. John's Wort**) was found on waste-ground at Morchard Road by Bob Hodgson and Bob Kirby.

Pittosporum colensoi (**Rautāwhiri**) Young plant, self seeded from nearby parent. Found in Barnstaple by Bob and Stephanie Kirby.

Polycarpon tetraphyllum (**Four-leaved Allseed**) appears to be spreading in Bideford, where it was found at several new sites by Bob Kirby.

Pterocarya x rehderiana (**Hybrid Wingnut**) was found planted as a landscaping tree in Barnstaple by Bob Kirby.

Rosa glauca (**Red-leaved Rose**) was found, bird-sown, in a cemetery in Tiverton by Bob and Stephanie Kirby.

Salvia hispanica (**Chia**) was found as a pavement weed on an industrial site at Roundswell, near Barnstaple, by Bob and



X Phyllosasa tranquillans 'Shiroshima' Found introduced and naturalizing at Saunton, and also as an escapee at Combe Martin, by Bob and Stephanie Kirby

Stephanie Kirby. *Sorbus thibetica* 'John Mitchell' (**Thibetan Whitebeam** cultivar) was found as a street tree in Barnstaple by Bob Kirby. *Sorbus x thuringiaca* 'fastigata' (**German Service-tree** cultivar) was found as a street tree in Tiverton by Bob Kirby. *Tsuga canadensis* (**Eastern Hemlock**) Several young self-sown saplings found near Parkham, by Bob & Stephanie Kirby. *Vinca difformis* (**Intermediate Periwinkle**) was found escaped and naturalized in woodland at Yarnacott by Bob and Stephanie Kirby.

v.c.5, [South Somerset](#)

Stephen J Parker and Simon Leach

Approximately 10,000 records collected in 2023. This is significantly lower than in previous years. However not all the records have been entered on to Mapmate / BSBI database.

Recording concentrated on under recorded monads in the south west of v.c.5 and the boundary with v.c.3 and v.c.5.

On the Quantock Hills meetings were arranged to rerecord uncommon species not recently recorded.

BSBI recorders continued to encourage beginners and

less experienced botanists to record in their local area and submit their records to the VCR.

Help was provided in the training of Somerset Wildlife Trust volunteers for their Wilder Churches Project, surveying churchyards, including advice on churchyard management for wildlife.



Helleborus x hybridus (**Hybrid Lenten-rose**) Found naturalizing in a burial ground at Tawstock by Bob Kirby



Rudbeckia hirta (**Black-eyed-Susan**), Macclesfield [Eve Halsey] PC

Training was given in identification of trees in winter time.



Ampelodesmos mauretanicus
Many plants found at Dunster
Beach on Wild Flower Society
meeting and later confirmed
by Mick Crawley

Our botanical records were used by the Somerset Wildlife Trust report on "the State of Nature in Somerset".

Stephen Parker and other local botanists organised and lead meetings for the Wild Flower Society on the Somerset coast.

In October the Somerset Rare Plants Group organised a conference to reflect on recording in Somerset over the past 25 years. Talks were given on a range of botanical topics relating to plant recording in the county of Somerset.

- *Dittrichia graveolens* (**Stinking Fleabane**) was discovered by Simon Leach on the M5 motorway close to Wellington. Other records from

Fred Rumsey and Ian and Paul Green

- *Yucca gloriosa* (**Spanish-dagger**) was recorded by Fred Rumsey. Persisting garden cast outs. In copse at field margin. Probably var. *tristis* = *recurvifolia*.



v.c.6, North Somerset

Helena Crouch

Over 48,000 records were made in v.c.6, by many different recorders; all input to MapMate and sent to the DDb.

For the Somerset Rare Plants Group, I organised a Vegetative Key Workshop led by John Poland: 34 members attended. The field programme included [6 meetings](#) in v.c.6 including an Aquatics Workshop led by Nick Stewart.

The Somerset Botany Group met weekly, mostly doing monitoring for Somerset Wildlife Trust. The Mendip Flora Group recorded every Thursday, led by Andrew Robinson, who contributed >11,000 records, made personally or with the group.



Gymnocarpium robertianum
(Limestone Fern) This Scarce native fern was found by Kevan Horne growing down a drain in Bath, probably originating as a spore from his garden further up the street, the first record in ST76 since 1949.



I led 22 botanical walks for the Cam Valley Wildlife Group and one for Bristol Naturalists' Society. Rob Randall led several botanical meetings for Bath Nats. Locally I led two public walks for a village Pollinator Party, which were popular. I was paid through a local council initiative (Somer Valley Rediscovered) to lead two "public engagement" botany walks, the first for Love Your Parks Week.

In addition to a talk for BSBI [Somerset Aliens - Helena Crouch \(youtube.com\)](#) I gave talks to local groups on Beautiful Burial grounds for Biodiversity, the flora of the Cam & Wellow valleys, and the flora of the Mendip Hills. I was interviewed for Radio Somerset wittering about Himalayan Balsam and featured in a short film about Cheddar Pink. Somerset Rare Plants Group

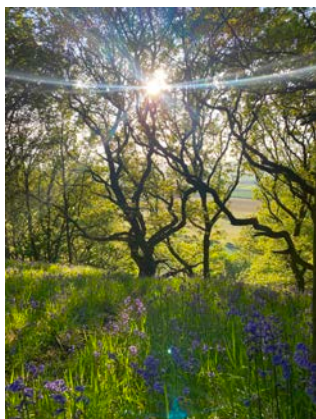
held a very successful 25th Anniversary conference for which I talked about Rare Plants of the Mendip Hills.

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

Eragrostis minor (**Small Love-grass**) This cute little grass was found by Fred Rumsey in paving in Somerton, new to Somerset, but it was tragically destroyed by weed-killer within two weeks! *Roemeria argemone* (**Prickly Poppy**) 15 plants were recorded by John Poingdestre in a very rich arable field, the first record for v.c.6 since 1992.



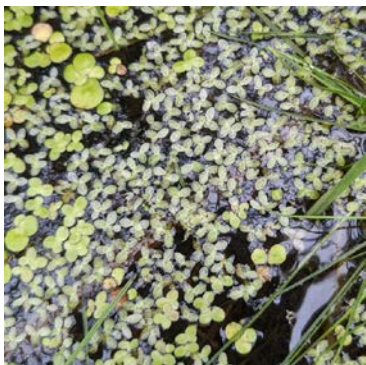
Callitriche terrestris
(**Terrestrial Water-starwort**)
Fred Rumsey found this as a weed in paving at Sanders Garden Centre, Brent Knoll, the identification confirmed by Richard Lansdown. It appears to be new to Britain & Ireland!



Bluebell wood, Roseberry Topping, North-east Yorkshire
[Dave Barlow] PC



Menyanthes trifoliata
(**Bogbean**), Salisbury
[Kathleen Groves] PC



Lemna valdiviana (**Valdivia Duckweed**) This alien duckweed was confirmed to occur in v.c.6, found in a cattle trough, then in a lake at Westhay Moor and in a ditch far from any house (all records confirmed by Richard Lansdown).



Chenopodium murale (**Nettle-leaved Goosefoot**) One plant found by Helena Crouch and Fred Rumsey in an upturned cannon on Steep Holm, the first record for v.c.6 since 2006
[See BSBI News 155]

v.cc.7, 8, [North Wiltshire & South Wiltshire](#)

**Richard Aisbitt and
Kat Newbert**

Recording in 2022

We had a busy year filling in gaps in our monad recording, gaining 41,000 records. We hope to complete our recording in 2024 in preparation for a new Wiltshire plant atlas and flora.

I have added data from three historic Wiltshire floras to the BSBI DDb, two floras from the late 1800s and one from the 1950s.

New county records

Most of our new finds in 2023 were garden escapes or bird-seed aliens. The most interesting of these was *Hibiscus trionum* (**Bladder Ketmia**) on an unusually productive landfill site. We also had two invaders from a neighbouring county. *Bidens frondosa* (**Beggarticks**) was known in Somerset and has moved

into Wiltshire along the Kennet and Avon Canal. First recorded here in 2022, it has now reached as far as Devizes, half way across the county. The second plant is *Scutellaria altissima* (**Somerset Skullcap**), already present in North Wiltshire v.c.7, but new to South Wiltshire v.c.8.



Eyes down for *Filago pyramidata* (**Broad-leaved Cudweed**)

Visit to Salisbury Plain

On the Whitsun Bank Holiday, eighteen BSBI members accompanied by 'red card holders' from the Wiltshire Botanical Society met to explore Sidbury Hill and Silk Hill, prime downland sites on the army training grounds. Species seen: *Filago pyramidata* (**Broad-leaved Cudweed**), *Minuartia hybrida* (**Fine-leaved Sandwort**), *Poa compressa* (**Flattened Meadow-grass**), *Vulpia unilateralis* (**Mat-grass Fescue**), *Cerastium semidecandrum* (**Little Mouse-ear**), *Polygala calcarea* (**Chalk Milkwort**), *Astragalus danicus* (**Purple Milk-vetch**), *Arabis hirsuta* (**Hairy Rock-cress**), *Tephrosieris integrifolius* (**Field Fleawort**) and *Neotinea ustulata* (**Burnt Orchid**).

v.c.11, [South Hampshire](#) Tristan Norton & Martin Rand
Recording activity

In 2023 over 43,000 records were added to the Distribution Database. Over 19,000 of these are records made in 2023; during 2024 we would anticipate bringing in another 5,000-6,000 of these.

Fieldwork

Formal fieldwork activity was concentrated on two activities during the year:

- Continuing recording at monad level to improve evenness of cover over the vice-county. Martin Rand is currently developing material on the Hants Plants web site to help contributors with more targeted recording for the coming years.
- Detailed population recording of notable species using the BSBI Threatened Plants Project form as a recording tool. Martin Rand and Tony Mundell (v.c.12 recorder) led a workshop for BSBI and Flora Group members in April to advise on filling in the forms, which included a field session



Fumaria vaillantii

(Few-flowered Fumitory)

Broughton Down Farm, Tony Mundell, Tristan Norton and Hampshire Flora Group conf.

Tim Rich. Only the third confirmed vice-county record.

recording *Lycopodiella inundata* (**Marsh Clubmoss**). 120 such surveys were made during the year across both vice-counties, and in v.c.11 included revisits to most known *Juniperus communis* (**Juniper**) sites, hotspots for *Myosurus minimus* (**Mousetail**) in the Meon valley and less-visited valley mires in the New Forest. The forms are being scanned, collated on a species-by-species basis with older similar recording sheets and made available on the Hants Plants web site.

Under the aegis of the Hampshire Flora Group Martin Rand led meetings to private estates on the North Solent NNR to update and augment records for ancient woodland, species-rich grassland and saltmarsh.

Tristan Norton also led meetings to coastal grassland and to arable farms on the Chalk, which proved very productive and popular with Flora Group members and led to some excellent new records.



Cuscuta campestris (**Yellow Dodder**) Fryern Hill, Chandler's Ford, recorded by Martin Rand. Abundant on sown annuals of "wildflower meadow" on Hiltingbury Recreation Ground, Chandler's Ford, recorded by Tristan Norton. Very extensive growth over c.200 square metres. New for the hectad and only the third record in the last 60 years. Also reported from a sown "wildflower mix" at Fareham, and presumably a seed contaminant in these mixes.



Collaborations

Martin Rand has continued to be involved actively with the New Forest Non-native Plants Project, particularly on monitoring and eradication of *Sarracenia* (**Pitcherplant**) populations on the New Forest. Tristan and Martin serve on the committee of the Hampshire Flora Group, through which many of the local field meetings and workshops at a county level are organised, and they publish articles through its twice-yearly newsletter *Flora News*. Tristan has now taken over the reins of BSBI representative on the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) Steering Group.

Publications and checklists

Martin has worked on an update to the Hampshire Notables List which informs the Hampshire Rare Plant Register and the criteria for notifying county Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), to take account of national rarity status and 'Hampshire

Responsibility' status based on Atlas 2020, and assessment of declines based on a more recent pair of recording periods. This should be published in 2024, and if any further adjustments to national Red Lists appear during this time they will also be taken into account. There have been no recent updates to the Rare Plant Register itself, but this is one activity that Martin hopes to be able to devote more time to now he has retired from the recordership (along with more work on the online Supplement to the 1996 Flora).



Melica altissima
'Atropurpurea' (**Siberian Melic**) By Wick Tea Gardens, Christchurch. Recorded by Felicity Woodhead, det. Eric Clement. NCR.

- *Agrostis capillaris* x *stolonifera* = *A. x murbeckii* Buriton. Recorded by Andrew Powling and Eric Clement. NCR.
- *Avena barbata* (**Slender Oat**) Tipner, J12 M27/M275, A3(M) J3, Waterlooville. Recorded by Paul Stanley. NCR but suspected to be elsewhere on the major road network.
- *Polystichum munitum* (**Western Sword-fern**) Swanwick Lakes Nature Reserve, recorded by Andrew Powling and Eric Clement. Voucher specimen held by Martin Rand. NCR.
- *Salvia hispanica* (**Chia**) Southampton, recorded by Ian Green; Petersfield, recorded by Ian Green and Paul Green. NCR.
- *Spergularia bocconeii* (**Greek Sea-spurrey**) Mudeford, recorded by Paul Stanley. NCR.



Glaucium corniculatum (**Red Horned-poppy**) Probably cv. Burnt Orange. Near beach huts, Calshot, recorded by Alison Bolton. On coastal shingle. NCR.



Atriplex longipes (**Long-stalked Orache**) Bailey's Hard, Beaulieu. Recorded by Martin Rand and Hampshire Flora Group. Plants with *A. x gustafssoniana*, in *Elymus athericus* / *Bolboschoenus maritimus* at shaded top edge of saltmarsh. A new hectad, and only the second post-2000 vice-county record.



Limonium procerum subsp. *procerum* (**Tall Sea-lavender**). Portsmouth: The Hotwalls, all along lower parapet and base of wall; Long Curtain, King's Bastion and Spur Redoubt. Recorded by Bob Wardell. Hundreds of plants along wall bases and on roof of one feature. New hectad and 4CR. Not native within the county, but it seems to have arrived along the main road network (A27 / M27).

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

5,163 records for v.c.12 have been entered so far on MapMate for 2023. This year I have concentrated on quality rather than quantity, with most records involving trying to re-find particular scarce species.

In Hampshire we have revived the BSBI Threatened Plant Project that ran for 2008-2013, using the same very detailed recording form. I was out with a few others from March to September, completing 80 forms. Before each outing I prepared detailed maps, one for each site to be visited, showing the precise locations of previous records of the chosen rare species, concentrating on relatively recent records that included an 8-figure grid reference. Those locations were pre-loaded onto my GPS as numbered waypoints also marked on the maps, so all could be visited in turn using the GPS 'GoTo' facility. The TPP form allows the plants not re-found to be recorded as well as those found. Often the reason for an apparent loss was clear with the lack of sympathetic management, typically with heathland invaded by Gorse or Bracken.

I also led a few weekend meetings for members of the [Hampshire Flora Group](#) and did a few surveys requested by landowners. A separate project involved recording every single 8-figure grid ref for 14 uncommon plants at one particular SSSI that I have known well since 1975.



Pinguicula vulgaris (**Common Butterwort**).

We have a newsletter called Flora News that can be downloaded from the website above. The last few pages of every issue have detailed records, sometimes with photos, of interesting plants.



Teucrium botrys (**Cut-leaved Germander**) Doing well at one site cleared of Birch scrub.



Potentilla anglica (**Trailing Tormentil**) Mostly 3 leaflets. Found in several new v.c.12 locations, but still under-recorded.

v.cc.13, 14, [West & East Sussex](#) Nevil Hutchinson & Ruth Eastwood

This is the first report for Sussex for some time. The previous VCRs both retired in 2017. In 2019 I took on the role of Records Officer for the [Sussex Botanical Recording Society](#) in order to process and submit records in time for the Atlas 2020 project. Last year I took on the VCR role for East Sussex and added West Sussex later in the year. I have now been joined by Dr Ruth Eastwood, who will be taking on the role of Assistant VCR across both vice-counties.

Sussex botanists have remained active since the last major project, the publication of *The Flora of Sussex* (2018). Two monographs have been published: *The Stoneworts of Sussex* Frances Abraham (Sussex Botanical Recording Society 2020), and *The Black Poplar in Sussex* Frances Abraham and Kate Ryland (The Sussex Black Poplar Working Group 2022). We have also undertaken surveys of [churchyards](#) and [village greens](#), coordinated by Helen Proctor and Jacqui Hutson respectively.



Gentiana pneumonanthe (**Marsh Gentian**) [Dr Nick Sturt]

An ongoing survey, coordinated by Dr Ruth Eastwood and Paul Harmes, is looking at how *Gentiana pneumonanthe* (**Marsh Gentian**) is faring in the county. We now have three years of data and plan to continue collecting for at least another two years.

Although preliminary, the findings suggest that it has been lost from some sites, with very small numbers remaining in one site away from its stronghold in Ashdown Forest.

A survey of *Baldellia ranunculoides* ssp. *ranunculoides* (**Lesser Water Plantain**) by Alex Worsley and his team at the Sussex Wildlife Trust discovered more than 2000 plants at the Castle Water SSSI near Rye, East Sussex. Although known at this site for many years, the numbers makes it one of the most important populations in the UK.



Neotinea ustulata (**Burnt Orchid**), Hampshire [James Pickering] PC

This year our main focus has been on updating our [Rare Plant Register](#), first published in 2001. We have identified nearly 500 taxa that are of national and local significance. So far we have records for 340 taxa since 2017.

In the New Year we will be creating a monthly RPR update detailing species which are 'out and about' in the following month, with details of areas to search. We also have a [Rare Plant Register](#) section on the website where we'll be posting regular updates.

The table below gives a summary of recording using our Excel Recording Card (ERC) and iRecord. The ERC is a macro-enabled spreadsheet developed by one of our members [*I use it for non botanical records and originally preferred it to MapMate for botanical records - Ed.*]. We no longer update it but many members still prefer to use it over iRecord, which is now our main method for recording.

	2021	2022	2023
v.c.13 ERC	5215	6353	7730
v.c.13 iRecord	2500	3500	5400

v.c.14 ERC	7556	6807	41*
v.c.14 iRecord	6300	7000	9500

* Table produced before the majority of ERC users returned records for the year.

Phleum arenarium (**Sand Cat's-tail**) was refound at East Head by Bob Wardell with a range of other important dune species for Sussex where this habitat is rare. *Vulpia fasciculata* (**Dune Fescue**), *Elymus farctus* (**Sand Couch**) and *Eryngium maritimum* (**Sea Holly**) were amongst the other taxa.



Phleum arenarium (**Sand Cat's-tail**) [Bob Wardell]

Sagina subulata (**Heath Pearlwort**) was found in an area of coppiced *Castanea sativa* (**Sweet Chestnut**) near Petworth, West Sussex. Other taxa included *Gnaphalium sylvaticum* (**Heath Cudweed**), which is not known in East Sussex.



Sagina subulata (**Heath Pearlwort**) [Nick Sturt]

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

This report covers both East Kent (v.c.15) and West Kent (v.c.16) and is only a brief outline. For a full report, please refer to Kent Botany 2023. This should be on the Kent webpage, but unfortunately in recent years BSBI has been slow to refresh the county webpage and as at January 2024 the 2023 issue of Kent Botany had still not been posted, even though available since the beginning of 2023. Similarly, sporadic progress has been made with restructuring the Kent webpage, although a milestone was reached with BSBI making available online the full rare plant register.

Geoffrey Kitchener &



Hybrids of *Erigeron acris* (**Blue Fleabane**) with *E. floribundus* (**Bilbao's Fleabane**) and with *E. sumatrensis* (**Guernsey Fleabane**) were found in a mixed population on a bank near Gravesend, the first Kent records

As at 1 January 2024, some 20,800 Kent records for 2023 were added to the BSBI database, covering 1,315 different taxa in 803 monads. There were eight plants recorded as new to East Kent and seven new to West Kent. Nine Kent Botanical Recording Group field meetings took place, ranging from north Greenwich in the west to Thanet in the east, and including joint sessions with Kent Field Club, Surrey Botanical Society, Sussex Botanical Recording Society and the Wild Flower Society.



Orchis purpurea (**Lady Orchid**), Kent,
[Hamish Jackson] PC

Monitoring surveys took place for Kent Biodiversity Strategy (KBS) species *Orchis purpurea* (**Lady Orchid**) and *Polygala amarella* (**Dwarf or Kentish Milkwort**). We have involvement in the preparation of the county Nature Recovery Strategy which is to replace the KBS. Further representations were made in relation to development proposals which continue to threaten the *Himantoglossum hircinum* (**Lizard Orchid**) colony at Betteshanger,



Eurybia divaricata (*Aster divaricatus*) (**White Wood-aster**) was found as an escape from cultivation at Woolwich; no other British records have yet been traced.

the second largest in the UK.

Carex divulsa subsp. *divulsa* × *C. otrubae*, the very rare hybrid between **Grey Sedge** and **False Fox-sedge**, was discovered on a lane-side south of Sevenoaks Weald, a first Kent record; the occasional developed utricle shows the shape of *C. divulsa* with faint ribbing from *C. otrubae*.



Hybrid sedge utricle



DNA fingerprinting of *Populus nigra* (**Black-poplar**) in Kent has led to the discovery in two places (including Shornemead Fort illustrated here) of plants which do not match any known clones and so may be the result of sexual reproduction, rare for Black-poplars in Britain – most trees are of recognised clones with wide British distribution and so likely to have been planted.



X *Dactylodenia wintoni* (the very rare hybrid between **Southern Marsh-orchid** and **Chalk Fragrant-orchid**) was confirmed from Bonsai Bank, Denge Wood, east of Canterbury for the first time in Kent.

v.c.17, [Surrey](#) **Sankey**

Ann

One of the main projects for Surrey Botanical Society (SBS) was working with Surrey Wildlife

Trust (SWT) to compile an Inventory of Irreplaceable Grasslands for Surrey. SWT are providing the technical support etc and the project is supported by Natural England. Despite being a relatively well recorded v.c., we were delighted to find some previously unrecorded unimproved grasslands spread throughout the county. Apart from the species mentioned below, there were few rarities but a pleasing range of grassland axiophytes. These include *Achillea ptarmica* (**Sneezewort**), *Crassula tillaea* (**Mossy Stonecrop**), *Hypochaeris glabra* (**Smooth Cat's-ear**), *Jacobaea aquatica* (**Marsh Ragwort**), *Moenchia erecta* (**Upright Chickweed**), *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* (**Corky-fruited Water-dropwort**), *Saxifraga granulata* (**Meadow Saxifrage**) and *Succisa pratensis* (**Devil's-bit Scabious**). *Campanula rotundifolia* (**Harebell**) *Ranunculus*

flammula (**Lesser Spearwort**) and *Potentilla erecta* (**Tormentil**) are not even scarce in v.c.17 but we did find a good number of new sites for these species. SBS is also continuing to record sites within monads.

One of the saddest new finds in 2023 may be for *Carex filiformis* (**Downy-fruited Sedge**) in an unimproved field near Thorpe, spotted by Barry Phillips. Sad because this field currently lies in the path of the River Thames Flood Relief channel. EA are now aware of this important field but it seems it was missed when the planned route was drawn to avoid the adjacent SSSI.



Geranium robertianum (**Herb-Robert**), Devon [Mandy Dee]
PC

Chamaemelum nobile (**Chamomile**) – believed lost from Godstone village green was pleasingly refound by the sharp-eyed Caroline Bateman.

Lysimachia minima (**Chaffweed**) found on field meeting on rutted muddy path at Blindley Heath SSSI. This species is mentioned in the citation but this was the first time it had been recorded by SBS there. Also, first v.c.17 record since 2009.

Galium parisiense (**Wall Bedstraw**) was found in a new hectad at Thames Ditton by Simon Riley.

Sisymbrium loeselii (**False London-rocket**) was found by Caroline Bateman in Godstone on outer edge of verge by road serving the Sibelco sand quarry.



Eragrostis virescens
(American Love-grass), was spotted by Geoffrey Kitchener growing in a crack in paving during the joint meeting with Kent in Rotherhithe and North Deptford and was subsequently determined by Eric Clement. It is a NCR and seems to be only the 3rd UK record.



Calystegia sepium subsp. *spectabilis*, seen scrambling over rough vegetation at the edge of Ashted Common in a power-line wayleave. Flowers appeared darker pink than remembered for *C. sepium* f. *colorata* and on examination plants showed the rounded basal leaf-sinus of subsp. *spectabilis*.

v.c.20, [Hertfordshire](#)

Ian Denholm, Alla Mashanova and Astrid Biddle

We held six field meetings of the Hertfordshire Flora Group at botanically diverse sites, and in addition hosted a three-day BSBI field meeting led by Rob Randall with a primary focus on brambles. The latter included 10 locations and recorded c.40 *Rubus* taxa, some of which were welcome rediscoveries of ones recorded by batologists in the past. A one-day grass identification workshop was held at Rothamsted Research in Harpenden for 12

attendees comprising both volunteers and professional ecologists. Survey work led by Astrid Biddle for the local Wildlife



Eupatorium cannabinum
(**Hemp-agrimony**), Birmingham
[Mahnaz Begum] PC

Trust centred on riverine habitats and provided valuable records for aquatic plants including the much confused species of *Ranunculus* subgenus *Batrachium* (**Water-crowfoots**).

The Bayfordbury campus of the University of Hertfordshire is a potential hub for FISC testing. We held a 'mock' FISC test there in July incorporating a field survey at Panshanger Park near Hertford. Some of our erstwhile volunteers offered themselves as guinea pigs for the day and enjoyed the experience, now being keen to undertake an official FISC test in due course!

In September the local Natural History Society convened a one-day conference to commemorate the life and achievements of Trevor James, an outstanding Herts naturalist and VCR for v.c.20 from 1983 to 2017. The event drew a large audience despite being held on the hottest day of the year. Ian Denholm gave a talk on Hertfordshire botany and BSBI atlas projects, alongside presentations on biological recording butterflies and birds (Trevor's other passions).



Helichrysum
(Asteraciae), Wisley
[Nigel Kennea] PC



First confirmed record in v.c.20 for *Poa infirma* (**Early Meadow-grass**) on the site of a car-boot sale near Welwyn Garden City and in the company of the locally very rare bryophyte *Sphaerocarpus michelii* (**Micheli's Balloonwort**)



Himantoglossum hircinum (**Lizard Orchid**) flowered at six locations (mostly as singletons). Two of these were newly discovered in 2023. The photograph shows a spectacular plant at the side of a busy road in an industrial estate in Letchworth.



Eleocharis acicularis (**Needle Spike-rush**), considered extinct in v.c.20 since 1975, reappeared in abundance at Hilfield Park reservoir following habitat restoration work.

- *Lotus tenuis* (**Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil**) (surprisingly scarce in v.c.20) at Waterford Marsh near Hertford.

- A hawkweed (*Hieracium virgultorum*) at Thunderdell Wood, Ashridge. First v.c.20 record since 1955.

v.c.21, [Middlesex](#) Dr Mark A. Spencer

2023 has been very much a 'desk-top' year! The majority of my BSBI and London Natural History Society (as the vascular plant recorder for the LNHS – covering the Greater London Authority (GLA) area and nearby parts of adjoining administrative counties) time has been devoted to producing vascular plant Red and Axiophyte lists for Greater London and Middlesex. The Red-list will form the basis for a Rare Plant Register that will, initially, cover a planned revision of the GLA Priority Species list. The draft results of the Red-list are disturbing, of 964 assessed taxa (native & archaeophyte) 169 species are regionally extinct, this is likely



Eriophorum vaginatum (**Hare's-tail Cottongrass**), Peak District
[Tom Aspinall] PC

to be a conservative estimate as there are many other species that have not been confirmed for a long time. A further 17 species such as *Centaurea cyanus* (**Cornflower**) have extant neophyte and ephemeral populations but are classed as regionally extinct in the wild. Another 156 species that have been assessed (either GB or England) nationally as Near

Threatened, Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered are, usually, under greater risk of extinction within the GLA area or Middlesex. Finally, a large proportion of the species listed as Least Concern at a national level (either GB or England) are facing some level of extinction risk within the region. The above work, and the associated work on an axiophyte list could not have been done without the assistance from our local records centre, Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), Paul Losse (Salix Ecology) and Julija Fediajevaite. We are planning a consultation exercise before the final documents are made available online via the BSBI, LNHS, GiGL and the GLA.

I led four joint BSBI/LNHS field trips in 2023: Victoria Park & Hackney Wick (20th May 2023); Rammey Marsh (17th June 2023); Monken Hadley Common (22nd July 2023) and Syon Park (19th August 2023). These walks provided some interesting

records as well as helped forge greater connection between the LNHS and BSBI. After completing the consultation on the Red and Axiophyte lists, I will be compiling and submitting data to the BSBI and the LNHS (pending ratification of data sharing agreements between these orgs and our local records centre, GiGL).

I was glad to be able to confirm the healthy status of two Middlesex rarities, *Scilla autumnalis* (**Autumn Squill**) and *Campanula rotundifolia* (**Harebell**) at Hampton Court; the former is now only found at Hampton Court while the latter has reported from fewer than 10 locations, several of which it appears to died out from and the others are probably dubious or planted records. As it stands, it is probable that Hampton Court and the nearby Bushy Park are the only sites where this species has a future. John Salisbury was able to confirm that the important population of *Turritis glabra* (**Tower Mustard**) at Stain Hill Reservoir (not a



Campanula rotundifolia
(**Harebell**), Bedfordshire
[Richard Hollis] PC

public site) was doing well and he recorded several hundred plants. Sadly, during the joint LNHS/BSBI trip to Syon Park we were unable to locate *Sium latifolium* (**Greater Waterparsnip**) which I fear is now extinct. On the joint LNHS/BSBI trip to Monken Hadley, I pleased to confirm the presence of *Danthonia decumbens* (**Heath Grass**) a

species that faces the probability of extinction in the county within the next few decades. Astrid Biddle was able to confirm *Cardamine amara* (**Greater Bitter-cress**) in the far north-west of Middlesex, right on the border with Hertfordshire, this is yet another species that is not nationally threatened but is in deep trouble in the London area. Mario Maculan found *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* (**Corky-fruited Water-dropwort**) near the Thames, this was only the second time that this nationally localized but apparently increasing species has been seen in the county. David Solomon found the non-native *Polystichum munitum* (**Western Sword Fern**) in the grounds of Alexandra

Palace, a county first. I'm rather fond of pondweeds and 2023 was a very good year for *Potamogeton* spp. in Middlesex. On the joint LNHS/BSBI walk in the Victoria Park area *P. trichoides* (**Hairlike Pondweed**) was found for the first time in the area; up until a few years ago this species was considered to be extinct in the county, it has now been found in several areas indicating its either been overlooked or is recovering. On the same trip, *P. lucens* (**Shining Pondweed**) was re-found at its last known site in Middlesex, the colony had not been seen for several years and I feared it had succumbed to the Canal and River's Trust's increasingly exuberant management of our waterways. Finally on a hot summers day in Kings Cross Trevor Dines and I found *P. friesii* (**Flat-stalked Pondweed**) in several locations along a stretch of the Regent's Canal that I know very well; this species was last seen in the county in 1949 – I was quite chuffed.



*Campanula
rotundifolia*
(**Harebell**), Ditchling
Beacon, Sussex
[Charlotte Pugh] PC

v.c.27, [East Norfolk](#) Bob Ellis

Nineteen Norfolk Flora Group meetings were held in v.c.27: some were held to fill gaps in the systematic survey of the county, seven of which focussed on clusters of monads which had fewer than 25 records; three identification workshops were held, looking at *Taraxacum*, *Ulmus* and *Populus*; one 'Introduction to Wild Flower Identification' meeting was held in conjunction with the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society; a meeting was arranged in conjunction with Norfolk Wildlife Trust which included some County Wildlife Sites and the remainder involved recording specific sites.

Over 10,000 v.c.27 records have been collated for 2023 so far.

Several interesting finds were made in 2023. *Myosurus minimus* (**Mousetail**) was found in a locality where it was previously unknown. Two locations for *Carex diandra* (**Lesser Tussock-sedge**) were discovered, the one near Holt seems not to have been recorded previously and the second at Southrepps had not been recorded since Rev. E.F. Linton found it in the same parish in the latter half of the 19th Century, presumably at the same location. In both instances the populations seen were very small. The neophytes *Amaranthus blitum* (**Guernsey Pigweed**) and *Rumex cristatus* (**Greek Dock**), along with several casual garden escapes were recorded for the first time in the vice-county. *Lathyrus hirsutus* (**Hairy**



Anacamptis morio
(**Green-winged
Orchid**), Dorset
[Vicki Gardner] PC

Canary-clover) and *Centaurea solstitialis* (**Yellow Star-thistle**) were recorded for the first time since 1975 (when they were both reported in the supplement to the 1968 Flora by C.P. Petch & E.L. Swann) though the latter had been known in the vice-county since well before that.

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

Recording in the county has continued at a high level, though exactly how many records were made is not well determined. The DDb “my county” page suggests somewhere between 26,690 and 30,862 records. MapMate has 27,885 for 2023, however some records were added directly to the DDb, initially via the DDb interface but more recently using the new recording app.

A BSBI meeting for new members and beginners was held in May. The Cambridgeshire Flora Group (independent of the BSBI) held ten meetings during the year and the Cambridge Natural History Society (also independent of the BSBI) had eight meetings that were largely botany focussed. Other groups, particularly the U3A also held meetings in the county, but rarely submitted records.



*Lepidium
campestre* (**Field
Pepperwort**)
[Peter Leonard]

As usual the county Register of Plants of Conservation Concern was updated, with the 13th edition being completed at the end of the year and uploaded to the DDb. The full document is available on the [county web page](#) at which is regularly updated with local information.

During the year I recorded the grounds of another two Cambridge colleges. I provided botanical tuition to an ecological consultancy, with four sessions taking place. The County Wildlife Sites panel met twice and I provided input and advice, including site visits. One outcome was the introduction of criteria for designating county wildlife sites on the basis of their arable plant flora. Outside the county I extensively recorded in Flintshire and Shropshire.

Many exciting finds have been made during the year, both of alien and native species. Some of these are listed on a [finds web page](#) and Alan Leslie reports on them in the annual newsletter, which is on the county web page and in more detail in [Nature in Cambridgeshire](#). This journal usually has a number of papers with a botanical focus.

Some particular highlights are perhaps the find of *Crepis foetida* subsp. *rhoeadifolia* (**Stinking Hawk's-beard**) at Hobson's Park, which is described in the January 2024 BSBI News; the find of *Orchis anthropophora* (**Man Orchid**) in Fulbourn (a second county site) and large amounts of *Carex strigosa* (**Thin-spiked Wood-sedge**) in Ten Wood (also a second confirmed county site).



The CFG examining the first tussock of *Carex strigosa* that was found. It turned out to be abundant on a nearby ride [Peter Leonard]

v.c.30, [Bedfordshire](#)

John Wakely

Bedfordshire botanists have enjoyed an active year. Our Flora Guardian scheme, now in its second year has meant that 23 guardians are monitoring 47 species at 97 sites. Involvement of the Wildlife and Greensands Trusts will help ensure the longer-term future of the project.

Surveys were undertaken to establish the current distribution of 2 notable Beds species, *Ornithogalum pyrenaicum* (**Spiked Star-of-Bethlehem**) in the north-east of the county and *Gentianella germanica* (**Chiltern Gentian**) in the south. The former is very locally frequent in one parish, occurring mainly on road verges. The parish clerk has been instrumental in the creation of several new roadside nature reserves which have as a result been spared inappropriate cutting. The Gentians are now restricted to abandoned chalk quarries. One of these is managed by the Wildlife Trust but by far the largest population occurs in a

quarry owned by 'one of the market leaders in brownfield property development'.

NCRs - *Hordeum marinum* (**Sea Barley**), *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (**Four-leaved Allseed**) – both species probably expected. *Epipactis leptochila* (**Narrow-lipped Helleborine**) in broad-leaved woodland on clay – unexpected.



Gentianella germanica (**Chiltern Gentian**)

v.c.31, [Huntingdonshire](#) Pat Doody

As a newly appointed VCR I have little to report for 2023. On a personal note, I led two guided walks to Portholme Meadow and Brampton Wood for their spring flowers. I also began collating 30 years of records from Brampton Parish in v.c.31. A survey of *Butomus umbellatus* (**Flowering-rush**) and *Sagittaria sagittifolia* (**Arrowhead**) along the River Great Ouse and a tributary, Alconbury Brook, more than doubled the number of locations for these species in the Parish.

I joined a small group from the Huntingdon Fauna & Flora Society to survey meadows on Abbots Ripton Estate in August. I also surveyed a number of protected road verges in the north of the v.c., a contribution to a review being carried out by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire.

Owen Mountford reports *Portulaca oleracea* (**Common Purslane**), growing on the poached edge of a grass verge Chapel Road, Ramsey Heights TL243847. Probably only the third record in v.c.31.



Sagittaria sagittifolia
(**Arrowhead**)



Bellis perennis (**Daisy**), Dorset,
[Jessica Westlake] PC



Orchis mascula (**Early-purple Orchid**), Stroud [Fran Sinclair]
PC



Orobanche rapum-genistae
(**Greater broomrape**) Found by Peter Stroh, tucked away in a bramble patch growing in close association with Broom, just north-east of Papermill Meadow. Bramble scrub had been cleared from the area the previous winter which may have been beneficial to the *Orobanche*. Previously recorded on site in 1993.

During our second year, the North Worcestershire Flora Group made 1095 records of 472 unique taxa across nine sites ranging from acid grassland SSSIs to urban streets in autumn. This included 44 Axiophytes and 27 listed on the Vascular Plant Red List for England.

We have built a strong association with the local Wildlife Trust and this winter will be encompassing their botanical study group.

A first county record was created following the determination of *Brachypodium rupestre* (**Tor-grass**) frequent on Windmill Hill SSSI, with *Ononis spinosa* (**Spiny Restharrow**) and *Astragalus glycyphyllos* (**Wild Liquorice**).

Spiranthes spiralis (**Autumn Lady's-tresses**) was found during our visit to Castlemorton Common SSSI. Over 100 flowering stems were counted in a small area on the east side of the road.

It was a particularly interesting day, also recording *Helosciadium inundatum* (**Lesser Marshwort**) and *Oenanthe fistulosa* (**Tubular Water-dropwort**) in a stream channel, thanks to Michael Liley and John Bishop. The ground has since been thoroughly trampled by cattle so it will be interesting to see if these species survive in spite of or because of the disturbance.



Spiranthes spiralis (**Autumn Lady's-tresses**) at Castlemorton Common SSSI



Bupleurum tenuissimum
(Slender Hare's-ear) was found on Hollybed Common where hundreds of plants were in dense swathes along a sandy track edge. Once studied, we could then pick out less abundant patches distributed within the grassland.



Silene dichotoma (**Forked Catchfly**) Worcestershire's only previous records were in arable fields in 1886 (SO96), 1888 (SO84) and 1900 (SO75). So its discovery in 3 novel locations (Churchill SO8779, Lower Smite SO8859 and Droppingwell SO8074) during 2022 and 2023 is notable. The occurrence aligns with a small surge in records nationally during the last decade. It appears to be an uncommon seed contaminant in some wild seed mixes.

v.c.39, [Staffordshire](#)

John Hawksford

10,154 new monad records for the current decade were made. They were entered into MapMate or the BSBI Recording app and, hence, the BSBI Distribution database. This is a substantial increase as compared to previous years, in spite of the increasing frailty and/or health and/or severe transport problems experienced by most of the long term and more prolific recorders. The number of individuals supplying field data increased to 33, of whom 13 recorded from several, or many different monads.

Details of the most significant records are given in The Annual Plant Report already posted on the Staffordshire page of the BSBI website.

Several plant identification and other queries received in e-mails and the post have all been answered promptly and in detail.

Disappointingly, only a couple of the BSBI previously “inactive” members residing in Staffordshire were able to take part in surveys during the year in spite of offers to provide help and advice with plant recording. These offers included supplying monad lists and maps of relevant localities.

Comparisons and collaboration has been undertaken with the work of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Survey Teams.

With the appointment of a Joint Recorder it is hoped to expand activities, including those of organised Field Meetings.



Parnassia palustris
(**Grass-of-Parnassus**),
Lindisfarne,
Northumberland [Wendy
Gray] PC

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

v.c.40 Rare plants revisited

We currently have a focus on refinding rare species and so far a total of eight species have been “retrieved” from the list of those presumed extinct since 2005 (Lockton and Whild, 2005):

- *Saxifraga hypnoides* (**Mossy Saxifrage**) (last record 1871, in the wild) - was found in 2023 by Lucy Watts at Snailbeach Lead Mine SSSI, near to the village but looking plausibly like natural establishment rather than planted, in suitable habitat at a new location for the species in the county.



Saxifraga granulata (**Meadow Saxifrage**)

- *Potamogeton gramineus* (**Various-leaved Pondweed**)
(last record 1885) - this species was re-found in Shropshire in 2014.

- *Hippuris vulgaris* (**Mare's-tail**) (last record 1897) - recorded in 2013 and 2014, and consistently from 2020 to present day in various locations.
- *Limosella aquatica* (**Mudwort**) (last record 1962) - has now been recorded in most years from 2005 to 2023 at Venus Pool, Shropshire Ornithological Society's bird reserve.
- *Cardamine impatiens* (**Narrow-leaved Bitter-cress**) (last record 1993) - was rediscovered in 2007 and has been recorded in most years since then to 2019.
- *Hymenophyllum wilsonii* (**Wilson's Filmy-fern**) (last record 1984) - was refound, probably at the exact same location in 2005, and again in 2012, 2014 and 2018.
- *Gentianella campestris* (**Field Gentian**) (last record 1986) - a large population was rediscovered at a previously known, privately owned site in 2023.
- *Potamogeton friesii* (**Flat-stalked Pondweed**) (last record 2002) – this species was refound in 2014, and in 2018 in Newport Canal SSSI, a Shropshire Wildlife Trust reserve.
- Two species have been re-recorded since 2005 but may have disappeared again:
- *Diphasiastrum alpinum* (**Alpine Clubmoss**) (last record 1991) - it was recorded again in 2012 and each year until 2019 at Nipstone, however it has been searched for every year since 2020 but not yet been found again.
- *Baldellia ranunculoides* (**Lesser Water Plantain**) (last record 1996) - this species was refound in 2005 at Brown Moss SSSI, a Shropshire Council reserve, and has been searched for since in most years but has not yet been re-recorded.

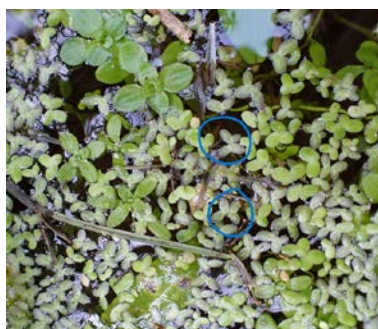


Succisa pratensis
(**Devil's-bit Scabious**),
Cotswolds [Anna Field] PC

It is entirely possible that following analysis of the records other species may join the rare plant list and even worse the 'presumed extinct' list, however these reappearances were a cause for celebration.

Reference: Lockton, A.J. & Whild, S.J. 2005 Rare Plants of Shropshire 3rd Edition, Shropshire Botanical Society.

In a first for v.c.40, Olga Krylova found the introduced *Lemna valdiviana* (Valdivia Duckweed) in a pond at Onslow Park on 8th



Lemna valdiviana (Valdivia Duckweed)

October 2023 during the England Recorder's Conference. Also in 2023 Mark Duffell had it confirmed from buckets in his garden where he keeps introduced aquatics for teaching purposes. Mark reports that the Duckweed had been there for a number of years "looking decidedly odd", for good reason it would seem. The species is characterized by the two pairs of fronds appearing

like a butterfly – one large pair, one small pair, circled in the photo. The photo shows how the species can hide in plain sight, amongst native Lemna species, so do keep a look out and send good close up photos to [Richard Lansdown](#) the National Referee for aquatics, with all the usual details for a record

v.c.53, [South Lincolnshire](#) Sarah Lambert and Malcolm Pool

Malcolm Pool, Richard O'Connor and others have continued visiting under-recorded monads, while Neil Harris has been studying with the sub-species of *Dryopteris affinis* (**Scaly Male-fern**) in the vice-county. Uploading of records to the BSBI database has been limited by pressure of work and IT issues.



The South Lincolnshire Flora Group (SLFG) has continued to thrive. The Facebook group has 118 members and an average of 12 botanists attend field meetings. Seven SLFG meetings were held in 2023 (including two New Year Plant Hunts on 1st January in Stamford and 31st December in Lincoln). Three were held jointly with the Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union (LNU) and involved collection of herbarium specimens for the LoveLincsPlants legacy project. All included informal training and it has been good to see more young botanists attending.

Sites visited in 2023 were:

- Castle Bytham NR in April, where we found *Anacamptis morio* (**Green-winged Orchid**) new to the reserve.
- Twyford Wood in May, where we found a surprising record of *Fragaria ananassa* 'Pink Panda' (**Garden Strawberry**).
- Doddington Hall in late July, a very well attended joint meeting with the LNU, where we updated records for many acid-loving plant species rare in v.c.53.
- Boothby Wildland in August, where we discovered a new population of *Epipactis purpurata* (**Violet Helleborine**) at only its second site in v.c.53.

- Moulton Marsh NR, which had a good range of saltmarsh and grassland species, including several bushes of *Suaeda vera* (**Shrubby Sea-blite**) at one of its most inland sites in GB.

A thriving population of *Taraxacum berthae* (**Bertha's Dandelion**) was found in Jackson's Meadow NR, an unimproved ridge-and-furrow in Castle Bytham, during a SLFG trip and confirmed by John Richards. This endemic species has distinctively spotted leaves and a predominantly western distribution. This is the first confirmed record for Lincolnshire.



Taraxacum berthae
(**Bertha's Dandelion**)

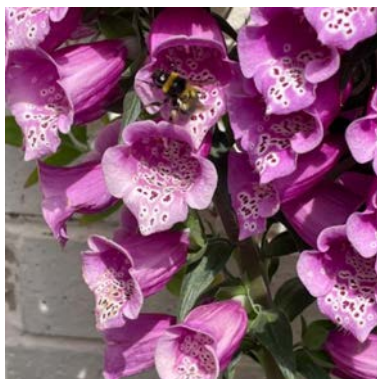
v.c.55, [Leicestershire](#)

Stephen Woodward

Some 21,068 records have been entered into the DDb for 2023. Geoffrey Hall and Stephen Woodward continue to monitor tetrad coverage to direct fieldwork towards under-recorded areas. Square-bashing in these botanical backwaters has gathered about 12,000 records. Using the Atlas 2020 metric, we now have 552 tetrads (76%) well-recorded in v.c.55.

We conducted a grassland survey on the Belvoir escarpment, to help a farmer with a grant application, and we helped with a survey of Cropston parish. Geoffrey Hall and Stephen Woodward attended the aquatic plant course at Treborth Botanic Garden.

Meanwhile Russell Parry and his team of urban botanists have focused on Leicester City, working their way around 50 monads and amassing 6,700 records. Russell Parry has also run ID courses for our local recording network, NatureSpot, encouraging contributors to record more confidently. He assists with the maintenance and development of the University of Leicester Herbarium.



Digitalis purpurea (**Foxglove**)
with a bee, Liverpool [Linda Cheveau] PC

In terms of species, *Euphrasia arctica* (**Arctic Eyebright**) and *Gymnadenia conopsea* s.s. (**Chalk Fragrant-orchid**) were confirmed in two nature reserves where they had not been critically examined before; both were atypical, robust forms. Sixteen neophytes were added, mostly from urban and suburban localities.



Between us, we have contributed botany reports for local society newsletters and presented a summary of recent recording at the on-line Recorder's Conference for Leicestershire & Rutland. Geoffrey Hall published Guy Messenger's supplement to the Flora of Rutland – detailing records arising from fieldwork and research between 1971 and 1990. Stephen Woodward contributed an article to British Wildlife (35.2), including some botanical work at Grace Dieu.

v.c.56, Nottinghamshire Mark Woods, David Wood

To date 33,754 records have been collected, most of which have been uploaded to the DDb.

The Biological Records Centre has been as busy as ever and shared all of their records. Fieldwork effort by the county recorders has been lower than previous years. Mark Woods has been collating and writing captions for a county flora. David Wood has split his time between vascular plant and bryophyte recording. There has been a lot of recording activity in the City of Nottingham led by K. Fry and an update of *Viscum album* records across the county by M. Penson.

BSBI held a well-attended field trip to Rufford Colliery.

Mark Woods continues to collaborate with Notts Wildlife Trust and Trent University on a Species Reintroduction Forum. Heathland species being the focus of the recovery efforts. The RPR list is updated annually and is used for a range of county initiatives particularly strategic planning for conservation.

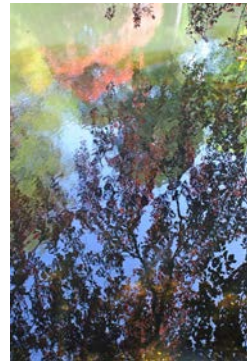


Ophrys sphegodes
(**Early Spider-orchid**),
Castle Hill, South Downs
NNR [Les Binns] PC

- *X Triticosecale rimpaui* (*Secale cereale* (**Rye**) x *Triticum aestivum* (**Bread Wheat**)) North Clifton Field. SK836717.

Wood, D.C., Woods, M. 28/08/2023. 2CR. Self-sown plants in fallow field.

- *Vulpia ciliata* (**Bearded Fescue**) Daneshill Grassland. SK673866. Wood, D.C., Woods, M., 03/06/2023. NCR, 3 small patches in sparse, rabbit grazed grassland.
- *Urtica membranacea* (**Mediterranean Nettle**) Welbeck Garden Centre. SK54997418. Hughes, P. 09/05/2023. NCR, within the garden centre.
- *Spinacia oleracea* (**Spinach**) Worksop. SK58317858. Coles, G.L. 11/06/2023. 1 plant. NCR. Track to Scout hut.
- *Pleioblastus chino* (**Maximowicz's Bamboo**) Worksop SK58027818. Coles, G.L.D. 01/07/2011. NCR. This is growing in the back garden of a house on Watermeadows but has escaped onto waste ground the other side of the fence.
- *Cotula coronopifolia* (**Buttonweed**) Highfields Park. SK538376. Fry, K. 31/07/2020. 2CR.
- *Geranium bohemicum* (**Bohemian Crane's-bill**) Elmswood Gardens, Sherwood SK5783643197 Fry, K. 23/05/2023 NCR. Base of a garden wall, escape from a planted population in a rockery above.
- *Lotus hirsutus* (**Hairy Canary-clover**) Jessop Close, Newark-on-Trent SK810543 Johnson, R.A. 05/06/2023, 2CR, growing in the street
- *Juncus marginatus* (**Grass-leaved Rush**) Rufford Colliery SK599606 BSBI Field Meeting 15/07/2023. First recorded 2021, but not verified until 2023. BSBI News article submitted.
- *Equisetum x rothmaleri* (*E. arvense* x *palustre*) Hawton Gypsum Works. SK803502 and SK802494. Johnson, R.A., 07/08/2023, NCR. Both parents present in extensive *Equisetum* colony along drain c.400 m. Resembles a



Fagus sylvatica
'Purpurea' (**Copper Beech**), Hants
[Gavin Thomson]
PC

paler *E. arvense* with 8+ ridges but with obvious pale scarious edged dark teeth on stem sheath.

- *Carex morrowii* (**Japanese Sedge**) Fox Covert, Shireoaks. SK563820, Johnson, R.A. 15/09/2023, NCR. Large patch near edge of pond. Presumably planted and spreading to form a sizable patch.
- *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* (**Inland Club-rush**) Cotham Flash, SK79664978, Johnson, R.A., 21/09/2023, NCR TBC. Large stand in non-saline sitaution away from the colliery sites. Specimen shows some charactreristics of *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* having long peduncles. However could not distinguish from a *B. maritmus* (**Sea Club-rush**) with long peduncles, as the collected specimen seemed too immature to show any critical achene characters. Revisit needed.



Jacobaea vulgaris
(**Common Ragwort**),
Norfolk [Heather
Sheppard] PC

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

Eight one-day outdoor meetings in v.c.57 to record plants and improve identification skills. 5k records for 2023 plus a further 10k for previous years. The 2023 records included new county records and second records the more interesting of which are given below.

- *Althaea officinalis* (**Marsh-mallow**) A single plant of this next to a fishing pond in Swadlincote Woodlands (SK3020) 26th September.
- *Poa bulbosa* (**Bulbous Meadow-grass**) Noted by Brian Gough on a meeting in Dove Dale growing abundantly in

thin soil over limestone near the Main car park (SK1451)
13th May.



Oxyria digyna (**Mountain Sorrel**) was recorded as a pavement weed in Chesterfield (SK3770) by Fiona Keeler 12th September.



Chaenorhinum origanifolium (**Malling Toadflax**) was spotted on a stone wall at North Mill Belper (SK3448) by Philip Precey 19th July.



Daniel Lusher-Sellors found *Cicutia virosa* (**Cowbane**) growing in large quantity in two new balancing ponds at Mackworth (SK3165) 24 June.



Dittrichia graveolens (**Stinking Fleabane**) was found growing abundantly alongside the M1 at junction 30 (SK4776) by Mick Lacey 17th September.

- Mick Lacey found *Anthriscus caucalis* (**Bur Chervil**) in the Fisherman's Carpark at Ogston Reservoir (SK3759) on 16th May: first record since 1990.

- Claire and Mary Smith found *Lathyrus hirsutus* (**Hairy Vetchling**) near Puddingpie Hill (SK3071) on 9th July: first record since 1969.

v.c.61, [South-east Yorkshire](#)

Rohan Lewis

Field work has confirmed that *Thysselinum palustre* (**Milk-parsley**), *Gentiana pneumonanthe* (**Marsh Gentian**) and *Platanthera chlorantha* (**Greater Butterfly-orchid**) are still clinging on in their sole remaining sites in this heavily-farmed county. *Actaea spicata* (**Baneberry**) survives in two, while some guerilla botany has actually increased the known sites for *Paris quadrifolia* (**Herb-paris**) from two to three.

An ecologically-minded Colonel invited Hull Natural History Society (HNHS) to survey his army base, used for tank training, and this uncovered a hitherto unknown population of *Mentha pulegium* (**Pennyroyal**), believed extinct in the vice-county since its loss from an unrelated site over 50 years ago.



Trifolium (**Clover**), Forest of Dean, [Emma Kenworthy] PC

In the urban areas of Hull and its environs we have had NCRs for three aliens – *Euphorbia oblongata* (**Balkan Spurge**), *Pilosella flagellaris* subsp. *flagellaris* (**Spreading Mouse-ear-hawkweed**) and *Laphangium luteoalbum* (**Jersey Cudweed**).

Perhaps the most surprising find of all was also made within the city of Hull, where an HNHS member spotted *Lathyrus nissolia* (**Grass Vetchling**), a plant with a single previous v.c. record, at a different site, 60 years ago. It was in flower among grass in a “railway triangle”.



Lathyrus nissolia (**Grass Vetchling**) [Africa Gomez]

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

Dave Barlow

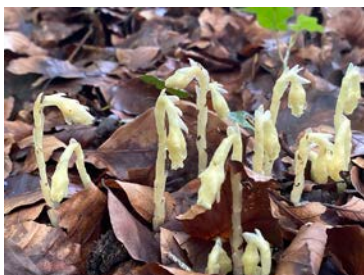
Although there are still some records to come in for 2023 both from iRecord and iNaturalist we have entered some 3,800 odd records this year. Unlike some counties in the south we do suffer from a lack of recorders. Our main recorders are only enough to occupy a couple of cars at best.

This year marks the remarkable 50 year study of May Moss, Margaret Atherton studied it as part of her PhD 50 years ago. It's an upland blanket bog, a rare habitat on the North York Moors, which are dominated by dry heath. She set up monitoring transects, and discovered *Rubus chamaemorus* (**Cloudberry**) growing in one small central area. *Andromeda polifolia* (**Bog-rosemary**) also grows abundantly - the only site in v.c.62, and an outlier on the distribution map. Botanical monitoring of the May

Moss vegetation, and the Cloudberry & Bog Rosemary in particular, has continued for the past 50 years, led by Margaret, with some assistance from Forestry England, North York Moors National Park Authority and Place Yorkshire. The Cloudberry is struggling, with only a few small leaves remaining from the larger plants discovered by Margaret.



Neotinea ustulata (**Burnt Orchid**), Hampshire, [James Pickering] PC



Hypopitys monotropa subsp. *hypophegea*. The most notable find during the year was a quite large colony of Yellow Bird's-nest. The colony was a new one and consisted of some 200+ plants in flower. Unfortunately the site may be at risk of development.



Rubus cissburiensis, *R. errabundus*. Plant finds have been scarce during the year and include mostly alien species. David Earle, the Rubus expert, came to Teesside during the summer as part of a BSBI Rubus weekend in v.c.66 and v.c.62. While walking along the south bank of the River Tees David found two new species for the county *R. cissburiensis* (Series *Rhamnifolii*) and *R. errabundus* (Series *Sylvatici*).



Cloudberry leaves with Sundew

v.c.63, [South-west Yorkshire](#)
McDowell

Louise Hill & Kay

We had seven outings in 2023. We concentrated on visiting sites which hadn't been visited for some time and also RDL (Red Data List) species.

Louise and a small group of Doncaster botanists continued the detailed mapping of the distribution of two local rarities - *Andromeda polifolia* (**Bog-rosemary**) and *Vaccinium oxycoccos* (**Cranberry**) at Hatfield Moors SAC and SSSI.

Trichomanes speciosum (**Killarney Fern**) gametophyte (an RDL species) at Bell Bank Wood, Bingley site now been given Local Wildlife Site protection.

Louise and small group of fellow South West Yorkshire Botany Group members investigated a historic site for *Carex elongata* (**Elongated Sedge**) in Rotherham.

A previously unconfirmed colony of *C. digitata* (**Fingered Sedge**) was located on some of the Magnesian limestone outcrops in the Don Gorge SSSI (following a promising lead provided by a former local botanist Ian McDonald).

Louise and Kay attended 'An Introduction to Dandelions' with Mark Lynes at Thorne & Hatfield Moors



Steve Hindle found *Botrychium lunaria* (**Moonwort**) with deeply incised leaves at Hardcastle Craggs near Hebden Bridge in June.



Louise Hill found a new colony of *Lycopodium clavatum* (**Stag's-horn Clubmoss**) at a site above Wessenden Head reservoir whilst out on a non-botany walk with friends!

Conservation Forum.

Louise and local botanists visited King's Wood, Roche Abbey to search for *Paris quadrifolia* (**Herb-paris**) RDL species – sadly not found this time.

Louise gave a well-attended illustrated afternoon talk on 'Local Botany' as part of the Bawtry Arts Festival. The meeting included advice on how



Dr Mike Canaway found a large population of *Cirsium heterophyllum* (**Melancholy Thistle**) near Denshaw in July.



Guy Wallbanks recorded *Helleborus foetidus* (**Stinking Hellebore**) at Wighill in September, which is a new hectad (SE44) record. Wighill is a village in North Yorkshire in between York and Leeds and is in v.c.64.

to start botanising and included live and pressed specimens as well as photographs of plants likely to be found in the local area.

A first record for *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* (**Cowberry**) in SD90, since 1798.

At Blackmoorfoot Reservoir *Polypodium interjectum* (**Intermediate Polypody**) was recorded (an RDL species).

Louise visited Calderdale Council's Sphagnum growing project at Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve and took the opportunity to check on the colony of *Pyrola rotundifolia* (**Round-leaved Wintergreen**), an RDL species which grows on the re-vegetated fly ash lagoons next to the River Calder.

Kay has been checking records from Guy Wallbanks from the York area (v.cc.61, 62 & 64). He's recorded approximately 11,000 records during 2022-23. Records will be transferred on to DDb.

Jill Lucas published her updated 'Flora of Huddersfield.'

v.c.65, [North-west Yorkshire](#)

Linda Robinson

We have had a good year, lots of records received from various recorders. The Field Meetings were well attended, one of the highlights was finding *Cladium mariscus* (**Great Fen-sedge**) at Marfield Fen as it hadn't been recorded in the SSSI designation. We also found the relatively rare *Alchemilla filicaulis* subsp. *filicaulis* (**Hairy Lady's-mantle**); the subsp *vestita* is very

common on the limestone grasslands in the v.c. but we only have eight records of subsp. *filicaulis* on the Database.

The annual monitoring of *Neotinea ustulata* (**Burnt Orchid**) took place around the beginning of June, the Glebe Field had five flowers and Swinithwaite Pastures also had five this year. The fields on private farm land below West Witton had a total of one hundred and fifteen plants, rather down on last year's figures due to the drought conditions, but the SSSI was still in favourable condition.

The *Pseudorchis albida* (**Small-white Orchid**) numbers were much reduced this year,

again the drought was blamed. Carol and Andrew Armstrong kindly did the monitoring for us and only recorded nineteen plants at Fotheringholme and two plants at Marsett.

In 2022 Sue Thurley and myself counted and recorded all the plants of *Alchemilla monticola* (**Velvet Ladies-mantle**) in one section of Hayberries Nature Reserve near Eggleston. The remaining section was surveyed by myself this year. We now hope to organise work parties to dig out the invasive *Alchemilla mollis* (**Garden Lady's-mantle**) which almost dominates the Reserve.



Steve Hindle found
Botrychium lunaria
(**Moonwort**) with deeply
incised leaves at Hardcastle
Craggs near Hebden Bridge in
June.



v.c.67, [South Northumberland](#)
Richards

Megs Rogers & John

Over 22,000 records have been collected this year. Collaboration with local organisations and landowners continues including surveys for the National Trust's new initiative "Wilder Wallington". During a survey for their new Beaver enclosure *Trollius europaeus* (**Globeflower**) - one of our England LORE project plants- was re-found, and a group visit to an old quarry yielded one individual of *Dactylorhiza x kernerorum* (**Common Spotted-orchid x Early Marsh Orchid**) and several of *Dactylorhiza x latirella* (**Northern Marsh-orchid x Early Marsh-orchid**) growing along with their respective other parents. Other finds from group visits included *Cochlearia pyrenaica* subsp. *alpina* (**Pyrenean Scurvygrass**) - the second site and growing in a calamarian riverside gravels site, *Vicia lathyroides* (**Spring Vetch**) present in high numbers at two coastal dune sites and a large patch of *Lepidium latifolium* (**Dittander**), the second site and first record for 180 years.

Particularly productive is the surveying of Newcastle upon Tyne area by James Common. Some finds this year are nineteen cotoneaster species including *Cotoneaster divaricatus* (**Spreading Cotoneaster**) (NCR but present in 8 monads), *Ceratochloa cathartica* (**Rescue Brome**) on a roadside verge but

also invading nearby gardens, *Achillea filipendulina* (**Fern-leaf Yarrow**) and *Echium plantagineum* (**Purple Viper's-bugloss**).



Spirodela polyrhiza (**Greater Duckweed**) Favourite random find by James Common. Big Waters, Newcastle.

Other interesting finds include:- an excellent bog sedge site containing *Carex limosa* (**Bog-sedge**), *C. lasiocarpa* (**Slender Sedge**), *Rhynchospora alba* (**White Beak-sedge**) and *C. pauciflora* (**Few-flowered Sedge**); *Myrica gale* (**Bog Myrtle**) a new site; *Gagea lutea* (**Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem**) stunning new site with 150+ plants.

John continued spreading knowledge of *Taraxacum* (**Dandelions**) with a visit based at Peterborough with recording in v.c.32 (Northamptonshire) as well as giving two workshops at the BSBI British and Irish Botanical Conference in Newcastle.

v.c.68, [North Northumberland](#)
Metherell

James Common, Chris



It has been a steady year in North Northumberland (v.c.68) with activity continuing on several fronts. Firstly, there has been a

noticeable increase in records with 2,813 supplied. The bulk of these came from iRecord, with further supplied direct or via iNaturalist – issues still exist with the latter route, but it is great to see more people getting involved in recording our local flora.

New Projects

Building on work carried out via the collaborative ‘Discovering



Asplenium marinum
(**Sea Spleenwort**)
[James Common]

Orchids’ project with the Natural History Society of Northumbria, Chris Metherell has been busy carrying out closer monitoring of some of v.c.68’s orchid populations. These including monitoring of *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *pulchella* (**Early Marsh-orchid**) on Ross Links, not done last year, and monitoring of *Corallorhiza*

trifida (**Coralroot Orchid**) on Holy Island - including one new site which had been reported last year and was very productive with 11 stems, and another single plant in a completely new site.

This year, Chris also helped to establish a monitoring scheme for *Astragalus danicus* (**Purple Milk-vetch**), working with the Northumberland Coast AONB, which has produced some interesting records and importantly, launched a joint monitoring scheme for *Gentianella campestris* (**Field Gentian**) on Ross with the Species Recovery Trust. This is a huge site with tens of thousands of plants and team members from the SRT reckoned the population is potentially the biggest in the UK. We’ll have to work out a sensible strategy to map the extent next year.

Rare Plant Register

Away from set projects, the VCRs have continued work on gap filling for v.c.68’s Rare Plant Register (RPR). Continuing to get a feel for the vice-county, James has visited sites for *Asplenium ceterach* (**Rustyback**), *Scilla verna* (**Spring Squill**), *Asplenium*



Asplenium x clermontiae
[James Common]

marinum (**Sea Spleenwort**) and others. Some highlights here include re-finding *Oenanthe lachenalii* (**Parsley Water-dropwort**) on Holy Island and a first visit to Hen Hole in the Cheviots where he encountered *Myosotis stolonifera* (**Pale Forget-me-not**) and *Epilobium anagallidifolium* (**Alpine Willowherb**). He was also especially delighted to encounter *Asplenium x clermontiae* (**Wall-rue x Maidenhair Spleenwort**) for

the first time. At last!

Efforts to nurture a community of local botanists continue, largely in collaboration with NHSN, with several education courses delivered by Chris & James in v.c.68. Several more are planned for 2024 incorporating visits to many of the vice-county's notable sites.

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

Mike Porter

Our year began with another New Year Plant Hunt with more than 50 people taking part but only 41 species being recorded, much fewer than in previous years, undoubtedly due to a spell of arctic weather in December. This was followed by our Snowdrop Hunt during January and February which brought in 825 records.

In March we held our Indoor Meeting at Plumgarths near Kendal, reviewing the previous year and making plans for 2023. This was followed by 7 Field Meetings, spaced out through the spring and summer months in various parts of Cumbria, one of which was a combined meeting with the British Pteridological Society.

During the season we held a National Field Meeting to look at sedges at Tarn Moor and Orton, made some progress on the updating of the RPR for Cumbria, thanks largely to the efforts



Epipactis palustris (**Marsh Helleborine**)

of some hardy mountain botanists, encouraged interest in the plants of Cumbria through our Facebook site, Cumbria Botany, which now has more than 870 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 17,000 new records have

been entered in the DDb, 8,700 from Westmorland and 8,800 from Cumberland.

The undoubted high spot of the season occurred when Trevor Lewis led a field meeting in a rich area of limestone grassland which he had discovered north of Orton. Here were *Primula farinosa* (**Bird's-eye Primrose**), *Carex capillaris* (**Hair Sedge**), *Epipactis palustris* (**Marsh Helleborine**), *Eriophorum latifolium* (**Broad-leaved Cottongrass**) and the Nationally Rare and Red List Endangered *Polygala amarella* (**Dwarf Milkwort**) in a totally new locality.

v.c.71, [Man](#) Andree Dubbeldam

My first year as BSBI county recorder for the Isle of Man has been a comparatively quiet year on the botanical front, but still plenty to report.

The first update of 'Plants of Conservation Concern Isle of Man', first published in 2022 is underway. Four black-listed (v.c. extinct) species have been rediscovered and moved to red; *Ranunculus sceleratus* (**Celery-leaved Buttercup**), *Rosa arvensis* (**Field-rose**), *Rumex maritimus* (**Golden Dock**) and *Vicea lutea* (**Yellow-vetch**). The highlight of which was the re-recording of *Vicea lutea* after a 15 year gap. It is still found in exactly the same position on a nearly sheer sea cliff near Port St Mary as when it was first recorded in 1907. Sheep had beaten us to the find, so the plants looked pretty ragged, but are like many annuals they will likely carry on until they get a window of opportunity to flower and set seed.

The Plants of Conservation Concern provides us with a challenging list of sites to update the status of our more critical species in 2024. We will be helped in this by the setting up of a local botanist's Whatsapp group.

Finally the winter has been a good time to find new records of *Ophrys apifera* (**Bee Orchid**) in mown and grazed grassland, with a good new site in a cattle-field in the southeast by Liz Charter, who was also responsible for re-finding two of the black-listed species. More Bee Orchids were found in mown grass around a limestone quarry office car-park in Ballasalla.

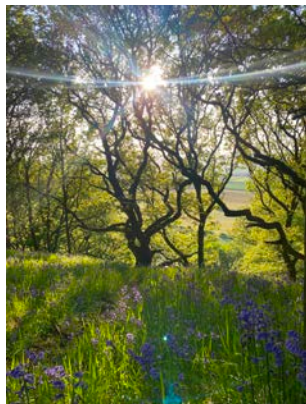
v.c.113a, Guernsey Helen Litchfield

In Guernsey our work is closely linked to that of La Société Guernesiaise, an organisation that was created in the Victorian era to conserve Guernsey customs and natural landscape. It has many sections, one of which is botany. As well as being the Guernsey VCR, I am the co-secretary for the botany section. In this dual role our small team are consulted by the Planning department on local planning applications. We also carry out quadrat surveys for our Agricultural, Countryside and Land Management Services department and our local Water Board.

In 2021 together with local Clematis grower, Raymond Evison, we set up “Grow Guernsey Natives.” Working with a local sheltered workshop, we gather seed of endangered and common species to retail to the general public. This has been a huge success in raising awareness of the difference between local species and imported wild flower meadow mixes. We are also building a seed bank of our endangered species.

One of our team, Gareth Coleman, has carried out an extensive survey of our *Asplenium* hybrids. Using both historical data, checking all known sites and finding new ones, he has compiled a spreadsheet of both *A. x microdon* (**Moore's Spleenwort (Hart's-tongue x Lanceolate Spleenwort)**) and *A. x sarniensis* (**Black Spleenwort x Lanceolate Spleenwort**). We have yet to find *A. x jacksonii* (**Hart's-tongue x Black Spleenwort**), not recorded since 2001. The intention is to build on the data year on year and to use the data to protect the species and put pressure on conservation measures.

As a team, we venture out, weather permitting, every Monday and Thursday, new faces are always welcome to join us.



Hyacinthoides non-scripta (**Bluebell**) wood, Roseberry Topping, North East Yorkshire, v.c.62 [Dave Barlow] PC

v.c.113b, Jersey Anne Haden

Nearly 4,000 records were made this year on the island. We continued to run fortnightly evening meetings throughout the summer and weekly meetings on Thursday mornings. John Poland visited the island twice and identified plants such as *Erophila glabrescens* (**Glabrous Whitlowgrass**) and *Festuca brevipila* (**Hard Fescue**). Then in October Richard Landsdown visited to look at sites where there are natural populations of *Cyperus fuscus* (**Brown Galingale**). Unfortunately this rare plant has not been seen for three years and Richard gave us advice on maintenance of the site to encourage the Galingale to return.



We have been active in advising the Government of Jersey Environment Department on botanical matters. We took part in producing a risk assessment of invasive plants and advising what plants could be used to plant on green roofs. We also took part in habitat monitoring. Our initiative of raising Jersey wildflowers using seed collected from local plants and hence collecting seed to sell went from strength to strength. Now people planting such things as wildlife gardens or pollinator patches are

able to use local seed and not imported seed. A further project this year involved the raising of plug plants of *Myosotis sicula* (**Jersey Forget-me-not**) and *Ornithopus pinnatus* (**Orange Bird's-foot**) and planting them back into their natural location to bulk up threatened populations.

A highlight during the year was that *Ranunculus paludosus* (**Jersey Buttercup**) flowered, it was last seen flowering in 2016. Other notable finds were:

- *Galanthus woronowii* (**Green Snowdrop**), a single plant found by Sheila Mallett beside a reservoir.
- *Arisarum proboscideum* (**Mousetailplant**) found on the roadside.

v.c.113d, Sark Anne Haden

I managed to visit Sark three times this year. During a visit with members of the Societe Jersiaise botany section one rarity we found was *Orobanche minor* (**Common Broomrape**). It was good to note that Sark is the only Channel Island to have nearly eradicated *Carpobrotus edulis* (**Sour Fig** or **Hottentot-fig**). On the second trip with John Poland we found about 6 plants of the rare *Logfia gallica* (**Narrow-leaved Cudweed**) in a quarry where thanks to Sark botanists access and maintenance is carried out. The third trip was to attend an inter island ecology conference being held on Sark, a chance to meet up



Logfia gallica
(**Narrow-leaved Cudweed**)

with other Channel Island botanists.

LOst Rarities in England

The county reports show that VCRs and others have been out looking for some of the apparently lost rare (and common) species that were missing from hectads post 2000.

As before, success has been mixed – some plants have clearly been there all along and not reported, some plants were probably 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.

I've made a few attempts, most recently tracking down *Blysmus rufus* (**Saltmarsh Flat-sedge**) in Flintshire (v.c.51, Wales). In this case a precise 8-figure grid reference had been given for where the plant was last seen in 1992. It turned out that this was actually 100 metres out, illustrating another reason why some plants are not refound. Having accidentally found *Bromus arvensis* (**Field Brome**) at Wandlebury last year it was pleasing to find some more there in a different field this year. The question is where had it been hiding since 1988?



Neottia nidus-avis
(**Bird's-nest Orchid**),
Elmstead Woods
[Sally Doust] PC

Jonathan Shanklin

Some frequent abbreviations:

ASM	Annual Spring (or Summer) Meeting
B&IB	<i>British & 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
LNRS	Local Nature Recovery Strategy
LWS	Local (or County) Wildlife Site
NBN	National Biodiversity Network
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.