

ADDITIONS TO THE FLORA OF WARWICKSHIRE 2014 AND 2015

by John and Monika Walton

A total of 31, 849 plant records have been received during the last two years, which is an increase of over 80% on the previous two. More individual botanists are gaining in confidence and “adopting a tetrad”, producing quality lists, including grasses and sedges. We cannot ignore the contribution made by John and Val Roberts who, during the last two seasons, have taken 80 trips to 70 of Warwickshire’s unfamiliar villages and amassed a total of 11,389 records between them, including a fourth record for the British Isles.

During this period the Warwickshire Flora Group held two indoor meetings at Brandon Marsh, the main speakers being Dr. Richard Gornall and Brian Laney, and held twenty-five field meetings across the county. As we are getting closer to the deadline for the proposed BSBI Atlas 2020, surveying has been a mixture of exploring poorly recorded areas of the county and revisiting the richer sites to ensure they are thoroughly covered. We also held a “Dandelion Day” in April 2015.

In 2014 Warwickshire hosted a national BSBI meeting at Sutton Park NNR, Warwickshire’s richest botanical site, and the following year Ian Trueman organized a series of surveys there. His plan is to record this fantastic site thoroughly in 500 metre squares and produce a flora in the next year or two. We have already discovered many rarities such as *Persicaria minor* (Small Water-pepper), *Euphrasia micrantha* and a large new colony of *Carex laevigata*.

The Flora Group also enjoyed two out of county meetings to Devil’s Dyke and Millers Dale in the Peak District., thanks to Brian Laney.

Eighty-one species were added to the county list during 2014-5. Many of these were either casuals, garden escapes or planted introductions.

THANK YOU WORCESTERSHIRE.

Records collected for the recently published *Flora of Worcestershire* by Roger Maskew, have greatly augmented our own county list. County plant lists are old-fashioned and are based on the Watsonian Vice-County system. Redditch, now in the modern county of Worcestershire (and so in the new Worcestershire flora), is actually in the old Warwickshire vice-county (V.C. 38). Some intensive botany in 10 km. square SP06, mainly by John Day and Bert Reid has actually added 34 species to the Warwickshire list, including 4 new Cotoneasters and an astonishing 18 species of Dandelion. We are lucky that the botanically rich Worcestershire Wildlife Trust reserve of Ipsley Alders Marsh is in our vice-county and that Worcestershire has such botanical expertise.

The list of Worcestershire-assisted species is:

<i>Berberis x stenophylla</i>	<i>Taraxacum atactum</i>
<i>Centaurea debeauxii</i> ssp. <i>nemoralis</i>	<i>T. boekmani</i>
<i>Centaurea x monktonii</i>	<i>T. cambricum</i>
<i>Consolida regalis</i>	<i>T. dilaceratum</i>
<i>Cotoneaster divaricatus</i>	<i>T. ekmanii</i>
<i>Cotoneaster sternianus</i>	<i>T. expallidum</i>
<i>C. x suecicus</i>	<i>T. exsertiforme</i>
<i>C. x watereri</i>	<i>T. hamatiforme</i>
<i>Hedera colchica</i>	<i>T. multicolorans</i>
<i>Kerria japonica</i>	<i>T. ochrochlorum</i>
<i>Mentha x smithiana</i>	<i>T. pallidipes</i>
<i>Narcissus hispanicus</i>	<i>T. pseudohamatum</i>
<i>Paeonia officinalis</i>	<i>T. stenoglossum</i>
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	<i>T. subracteatum</i>
<i>Spiraea x billardii</i>	<i>T. valens</i>
<i>Taraxacum anceps</i>	<i>T. xanthostigma</i>

T. ancistrilobum

Tropaeolum majus

Although these records were added to the Warwickshire list in 2014, the majority of them are from the 1990's or even earlier, but we were just unaware of them before. The two *Centaurea* records date from 1750 and 1817.

DANDELIONS.

Having "stolen" a good variety of Dandelion records from Worcestershire, we thought it would be a good idea to arrange a Dandelion Day at Brandon Marsh on Saturday 18th April 2015 to see what Warwickshire could do. There has been no serious dandelion recording in the county since the 1950's. We contacted John Richards, the BSBI *Taraxacum* referee, who told us what was required and thirteen members had an enjoyable day looking at, photographing, measuring and collecting dandelions. It was after that when things started to go wrong. If you have a rabbit and you go and collect dandelion leaves in a plastic bag, you will know that by the time you get home they will have changed into a slimy green mush. It is exactly what happened to our specimens. We originally had twenty-five, but managed to see twelve of them disintegrate whilst trying to dry them out. Obviously pressing dandelions is much trickier than we thought. We sent the remnants off to the referee with apologies, but he was unable to name any of them confidently to species. We will try again next year on a much smaller scale.

NEW NATIVE SPECIES

This year we chose to collect **Eyebrights**. In 2014 a BSBI Euphrasia Study Group was set up by Chris Metherell, the BSBI recorder, and we attended a workshop at the herbarium at Leicester University the following spring, where we all pretended to be able to tell the difference between many sheets of brown, shrunk and desiccated specimens that all looked virtually the same. Eight collections were made and sent to Chris, who identified two new hybrids for the county: *Euphrasia confusa x nemorosa* from Napton Quarry and *E. arctica x nemorosa* from Ufton Fields. The best find, however, was of a colony of *E. micrantha* (Slender Eyebright) from Sutton Park, a true heathland species, the only current Midlands record, that had been known about since 1866 but had not been critically examined recently. Mike Smith and Martin Rand also sent in material from the same colony to Chris. This was identified as *E. confusa x micrantha*, another first county record. Hybrid swarms are not unusual in *Euphrasia*. Specimens from Bishops Hill NR, Taskers Meadow NR, Harbury Spoilbank NR, Oldbury and Snitterfield Bushes NR were confirmed as *E. nemorosa* (Common Eyebright) the most common species in the county. Plants from the two largest Warwickshire populations at Taskers Meadow and Oldbury were also sent to Alex Twyford at the University of Edinburgh who is working on the genetics of the group. A new BSBI Euphrasia Handbook is expected soon.

We were pleased to find twenty new tetrad records for five species of **Hawkweeds** this year. The only new native was *Hieracium prominentidens* (**Large-toothed Hawkweed**) a tall large-flowered species found at Pooley Fields Country Park. A garden escape that is sometimes sold in garden centres as "Leopard Hawkweed", *H. scotostictum* (**Dappled Hawkweed**) was also added to the county list. It was seen on the Flora Group meeting to Lapworth. Two new historic records from the 1950's of *H. anglorum* (**Anglian Hawkweed**) and *H. consociatum* (**Sociable Hawkweed**) were also uncovered during research.

One surprising native species re-found in 2014 was the first record for 57 years of *Baldellia ranunculoides* (**Lesser Water-plantain**) which was seen in some newly created ponds at Alvecote Wood in October 2014. It was found growing with a large colony of *Utricularia sp.* (**Bladderwort**) at only its third site in the county. You can only identify bladderworts to species by examining the shape of their flowers so a WFG visit was arranged for the following year. Unfortunately, no flowers were seen on that meeting but a species of Stonewort *Nitella mucronata* which had not been seen since 1950, was encountered.

Agni-Louiza Arampoglou, from the Warwickshire Biological Records Centre, discovered a record of *Hypericum elodes* (**Marsh St. John's-wort**) hiding in amongst some old paperwork. It was found in 1992 near the River Sowe by Val Cooper. The site will be investigated again in 2016.

A record of the extinct umbellifer *Oenanthe silaifolia* (Narrow-leaved Water-dropwort) from Southam Meadow South was discovered while searching through old paper site records at the HBA in Warwick. Although the plant was seen in 2003 it was not included in Falk (2009). Unfortunately the wet meadow where the plant was found has since been built on. There are additional records for the county are from Bidford-on-Avon, Small Heath and Stratford-upon-Avon from the beginning of the 19th century.

The only other new native to the county was *Ophrys apifera* var. *chloantha*, one of the many varieties of Bee Orchid that was seen at Taskers Meadow in June 2014.

NEW NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Trees and Shrubs

As above, not all of the records below are for plants seen in 2014 or 2015. Some may be earlier records that have only come to light during the last two years.

- Chaenomeles speciosa* (Chinese Quince), J. Harris conf. J.S. Walton and M.V. Walton, near Hartshill Quarry, SP3390294041, a beautiful large shrub growing in a long derelict garden. 19 March 2014
- Cotoneaster dammeri* (Bearberry Cotoneaster), Selly Oak, Birmingham, SP042833, M. W. Poulton, 25 March/1997
- Cotoneaster franchetti* (Franchet's Cotoneaster), Gravelly Industrial Park, SP100894, J. W. Partridge, 2006
- Cotoneaster frigidus* (Tree Cotoneaster), Hawkesbury Spinney and Old Tip, Bedworth, SP362843, J. J. Bowley, 5 October 2010
- Erica terminalis* (Corsican Heath), Napton, SP45346150, 5 August 2015, J. Roberts, V. Roberts, det. E.C. Nelson. Growing on a bank beside the canal. Material is in Warwick herbarium. This is the fourth modern British record for this species
- Euonymus latifolia* (Large-leaved Spindle), Darley Brook, SP168741, J. J. Bowley, 17 October 2013
Extinction refund.
- Gaultheria procumbens* (Checkerberry), Claybrookes Marsh NR. SP380769, G. Hall, 5 July 2014.
- Genista monspessulana* (Montpellier Broom) J. Walton, M. Walton, near Mockley Wood, Tanworth-in-Arden, 3 July 2014, in hedgerow, SP12116855, conf. P.R.Green, Specimen is in Warwick Herbarium. This was a surprising find as it was growing a long distance away from human habitation.
- Hypericum* "Hidcote" Cross Hands Quarry, 16 July 2014, WFG, SP270291.
- Larix x marschlinsii* (Hybrid Larch), planted in plantation at Bentley Park Wood, Atherstone, SP290953, 6 March 2014, JSW, MVW
- Malva arborea* (Tree Mallow), 20 metres west of sign for M40 north on the Warwick Bypass, SP2890462167, Brian Laney, 13 January 2015
- Phlomis fruticosa* (Jerusalem Sage), Canal bridge near Mancetter Quarry, SP31479623, 29 September 2014, J. Walton, M. Walton. Two large shrubs were found between the two carriageways of the bridge.
- Populus trichocarpa* (Western Balsam Poplar), Tattle Bank, SP1863, E. J. Clement, 1962
- Pyracantha coccinea* (Firethorn), J. Walton, M. Walton, J. Roberts, V. Roberts, near River Tame, Dosthill north of the water-skiing centre, SP205991, 23 May 2014
- Tilia x euchlora* (Caucasian Lime), Beechcroft, SP148901, J. J. Bowley, C. Newton, 10 October 2013
- X Cuprocyparis leylandii* Wellesbourne Road, Barford, SP268605, Kris Long, Katie Kibble, Jack Ward, 9 March 2012.

Non-woody Species

- Anemone hepahensis* x *A. vitifolia* = *A. x hybrida* (Japanese Anemone), Stareton, SP3371, J. Roberts, V. Roberts, 20 October 2015, in pavement crack at base of wall.
- Aruncus dioicus* (Buck's-beard), Purley Chase Christian Centre, SP30499558, 16 September 2015, J. Walton, One plant next to the footpath by the wall.
- Daucus carota* ssp. *sativus* (Carrot), Houldsworth Crescent, SP328839 J. J. Bowley, 28 September 2013.
- Erigeron annuus* (Tall Fleabane), Station Road, Sutton Coldfield, SP12019628, 20 September 2015,

David Wall, confirmed J. Walton & M. Walton, Four plants in hedge border at south end of the car park.

Geranium macrorrhizum (Rock Crane's-bill), Cross Hands Quarry, 16 July 2014, WFG, SP270291.
On limestone spoilheap.

Geranium nodosum (Knotted Cranesbill), London Road Cemetery, Coventry, SP34247768,
Warwickshire Flora Group, one plant naturalized at the base of a tree.

Gunnera tinctoria (Giant-rhubarb), Oxford Canal Towpath, SP49747705, D. Long, 19 August 2014

Hemerocallis fulva (Orange Day-lily), Cross Hands Quarry, Long Compton, 16 July 2014, WFG,
SP270291, One plant from garden origin.

Hyacinthus orientalis (Hyacinth), beside the canal near Middleton Lakes, SP202981, J. Walton,
18 March 2015, three plants of a pink cultivar deliberately planted or from a
canal boat throw out.

Nymphaea marliacea (Pink Water-lily), Blue Pool, Bishops Itchington, M. Poulton, J. Walton, M.
Walton, 31 July 2014, SP39095877. In limestone Quarry, from garden origin.

Papaver pseudoorientale (Oriental Poppy), J. Walton, M. Walton, J. Roberts, V. Roberts, near River
Tame, Dosthill, north of the water-skiing centre, S203986, 23 May 2014

Pratia pedunculata (Matted Pratia), Dale Street Methodist Church, SP31466581, 20 September 2014,
J. Walton, M. Walton, identified by Ivan Hoste, growing abundantly in the
lawn to the right hand side of the church door.

Scilla forbesii (Glory-of-the snow) River Leam, Naturalized, J. Roberts, V. Roberts, SP337651,
16 March 2014

Vitis coignetiae (Crimson-glory-vine), Coventry Canal, Coventry, SP349814, 19 September 2014,
naturalized and spreading along at least 200 metres of canal. J. Walton,
M. Walton

MARSELIA, A FIRST FOR BRITAIN.

Some of you may have seen the article in the Flora Group Newsletter No. 10 about the introduction of a species of *Marselia* (**Clover Fern**) that was found in the new wildlife pool in Baddesley Ensor village. Although it was the first time that this fern had been introduced in the wild in Great Britain it has not been added to the county list as it was not fertile and Dr. Fred Rumsey was unable to give it a species name. We are waiting to see if it will survive the winter.

If you would like to find out more about the **Warwickshire Flora Group** and would like to help with plant surveying please contact us at johnwalton46@tiscali.co.uk or phone us on 01827 712455.

You can also visit our website at www.bsbi.org.uk/warwickshire.html.

Plant records, in any format, of both rare and common species would be very welcome.

References

Falk, S.J. (2009) *Warwickshire's Wildflowers*, Brewin Books, Studley.

Maskew, R. (2014) *Flora of Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Flora Project.