

Anglesey Plants in 2012

Ian Bonner, BSBI Recorder for Anglesey (VC 52). Cae Trefor, Tynyngogl, Anglesey, LL74 8SD.
BSBI@caetrefor.co.uk

The weather will doubtless be mentioned in many reports about 2012 – this will be no exception! Since June the general lack of sunshine and low temperatures, coupled with rain, have been a talking point. Rainfall figures for Treborth Botanic Garden, Bangor for June (5.6 inches), July (4.3 inches), August (4.1 inches), September (6.5 inches), October (5.9 inches) and November (7.2 inches) bear this out.

However the first Flora Group meeting, on 22nd May to Aberffraw, was under very different conditions – the dune annuals were shrivelling in the sunshine and the dune slacks were worryingly dry. We failed to find either of our target species, *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting) and *Hypochaeris glabra* (Smooth Cat's-ear); but were rewarded with plentiful fronds of *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort) - over 100 at SH360.682 for example. Also a very small quantity of *Scilla verna* (Spring Squill) at SH364.684 – surprisingly unrecorded from most dune sites in comparison with its great abundance on rocky outcrops round the Anglesey coast.

Our meeting, as part of the Cemlyn 'Bioblitz' on 3rd June, failed to take place with the cancellation of the whole event on the Sunday due to the stormy conditions.

On 26th June we spent a wet, but rewarding day recording between Llangefni and the Cefni reservoir in SH44.76 and 45.76, refinding *Carex acuta* (Slender Tufted-sedge) in several places along the Afon Cefni, from where it has been known since at least 1895. The only other known Anglesey locality is from around Llyn Dinam, SH31.77.

On 14th August Ian Hawkins lead us round part of the RSPB Malltraeth Marsh reserve to look at how plants are responding to the creation of a number of shallow water bodies.

Most impressive was the response of the nationally threatened fern ally *Pilularia globulifera* (Pillwort) which was locally abundant in recently created shallow pools in SH45.71 & 46.72. Also responding well was the nationally vulnerable *Oenanthe fistulosa* (Tubular Water-dropwort), near threatened *Baldellia ranunculoides* (Lesser Water-plantain) and county scarce species like *Apium inundatum* (Lesser Marshwort), *Elatine hexandra* (Six-stamened Waterwort) and *Hottonia palustris* (Water Violet).

The two final meetings were to make basic lists for some under-recorded grid squares. On 11th September we visited an area below Llangwyllog church, SH43.79 and around Wilpol, Llanerchymedd, SH39.84 & 40.84, both courtesy of Brian Thomas. On 6th October we visited the Llanddaniel area, SH49.70, 49.71 & 50.71. After which we were very kindly entertained to tea at nearby Tyddyn Adda by James and Joanna Robertson. Although no special habitats were encountered, nor special species noted, between 130 -150 taxa were recorded from each grid square – demonstrating the value of several pairs of eyes!

Returning to *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting) – we did visit all the Anglesey sites with post 2000 records – there are only 4 of them - and completed Threatened Plant Population forms. At Cors Erddreiniog, SH47.82 & 47.83, and Bryn Offa, SH57.81, the very small populations produced no flowers in 2012. At Fedw Fawr, SH60.82 the small patch produced 28 flowers – all female. There are two populations on Cors Goch, SH49.81 & 50.81, and only at the larger one were there any male flowers. During this winter the National Trust are planning some management at Bryn Offa to improve the habitat for this species. In the 1980's there were Mountain Everlasting records from 11 other locations, mainly limestone grass and heath; but also sand dunes at Aberffraw. Information about any other locations would be very welcome.

Counts of numbers of some of the other scarcer species continue to be carried out. In

June the RSPB looked at the known localities of *Tuberaria guttata* (Spotted Rockrose) on Holyhead Mountain and recorded 2885 plants (flowering & non-flowering) at 7 of the 11 known locations. Numbers of this annual plant vary from year to year, from, for example, only a few hundred in 2007 to nearly 6000 in 2002.

The National Trust continued to count *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly Orchid) at Plas Newydd, SH51.69, with the total of c.65 flower spikes considerably less than the 100plus of 2011.

Inadvertently missed from last year's report is Geoff Radford's find of *Parentucellia viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia) on the edge of the Wylfa Head LNR. When I visited in July 2011 there were about 200 flowering plants scattered over some 12m. x 10m. of grassland at SH353.942. Has anyone noticed it in 2012? The only other Anglesey sighting was by Richard Birch in 2004, when he noted it on a bank of the recently constructed A55, near Valley, SH30.79.

A 2009 record that only came to light this year is of the very welcome rediscovery of *Carex pallescens* (Pale Sedge) by the CCW Lowland Peatland team, from a small area of fen meadow at Llyn Hafodol SSSI, SH39.88. This always seems to have been rare plant on Anglesey, with only a two other records dating from 1970 and 1983.

This November Peter and Owain Jones discovered a new locality for *Huperzia selago* (Fir Clubmoss) on Mynydd Bodafon, SH47.85. This, another rare species on Anglesey, is only known otherwise from the heathland at Fedw Fawr, SH60.81. Until 1958 it was known from the nearby heathland at Rhoslligwy, SH48.85, until 1959 there were records from Llaniestyn Common, Llanddona, SH58.79, and at least until 2005, a small colony could be found on one of the rocky outcrops in Newborough Forest, SH40.62,

Not only has Ivor Rees continued his interest in members of the gentian family (see his article about unusual Autumn Gentians on the sand dunes at Rhosneigr); but he has this year been trying to understand the bindweeds (*Calystegia* species) on Anglesey. Ivor has reconfirmed *Calystegia sepium* subsp. *roseata*, the pink form of Hedge Bindweed, at its only Anglesey location on Penrhosfeilw Common, SH22.79, where it extends over 50m along the transition between the dry heath and adjacent mire. He has found the first site for *Calystegia pulchra* (Hairy Bindweed), with pink and white striped flowers and characteristic wavy edged wing to the flower stalk, from near Llangoed SH61.80. Ivor also found *Calystegia x lucana*, the hybrid between the native *C. sepium* (Hedge Bindweed) and the introduced *C. silvatica* (Large Bindweed), recognising it from several locations scattered across the island. Ivor has just heard from RK Brummitt, the referee for Convolvulaceae, that he confirms these determinations.

First records of other introductions in 'the wild' include *Verbena bonariensis* (Argentinian Vervain) from the outskirts of Beaumaris, SH60.76, noted by Ted Phenna.

Summary of Hectad recording in Anglesey

| Hectad | Total Taxa | Taxa Rerecorded since 2000 | % of total |
|--------|---------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| SH27 | 775 | 648 | 84 |
| SH28 | 842 | 666 | 79 |
| SH29 | 372 | 267 | 72 |
| SH36 | 788 | 608 | 77 |
| SH37 | 904 | 749 | 83 |
| SH38 | 708 | 540 | 76 |
| SH39 | 727 | 580 | 80 |
| SH46 | 941 | 784 | 83 |
| SH47 | 861 | 715 | 83 |
| SH48 | 893 | 758 | 85 |
| SH49 | 662 | 470 | 70 |
| SH56 | 538 | 368 | 68 |
| SH57 | 1066 | 851 | 80 |
| SH58 | 889 | 743 | 84 |
| SH67 | 615 | 481 | 78 |
| SH68 | 653 | 412 | 63 |

| Total NOT Rerecorded | Since pre1970 | Since 1970- 86 | Since 1987- 99 |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 127 | 29 | 43 | 55 |
| 176 | 67 | 47 | 62 |
| 105 | 19 | 26 | 60 |
| 180 | 54 | 41 | 85 |
| 155 | 47 | 37 | 71 |
| 168 | 24 | 34 | 110 |
| 147 | 25 | 27 | 95 |
| 157 | 43 | 31 | 83 |
| 146 | 44 | 20 | 82 |
| 135 | 27 | 26 | 82 |
| 192 | 29 | 29 | 134 |
| 170 | 47 | 39 | 84 |
| 217 | 118 | 43 | 56 |
| 145 | 33 | 21 | 91 |
| 134 | 48 | 26 | 60 |
| 241 | 54 | 28 | 159 |

| New since 2000 | % new of total |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 91 | 12 |
| 106 | 13 |
| 24 | 6 |
| 77 | 10 |
| 107 | 12 |
| 62 | 9 |
| 92 | 13 |
| 110 | 12 |
| 109 | 13 |
| 87 | 10 |
| 54 | 8 |
| 53 | 10 |
| 141 | 13 |
| 85 | 10 |
| 99 | 16 |
| 31 | 5 |