

VC 1 (Scilly)

Rosemary Parslow

2018 was a relatively quiet year. Quite a few people sent me updates, comments and even whole lists after they had seen the Flora! I was only able to get to Scilly in the spring; one week in May leading a 'wildlife' holiday was useful in checking for some of the vernal rarities such as *Viola kitaibeliana* (Dwarf Pansy). The cold spring had made many early plants flower very late, but when they did some, for example *Ornithopus pinnatus* (Orange Bird's-foot), put on a good show. The following week was spent carrying out ID and survey training with the IOS Wildlife Trust rangers. During the year I've also been a tutor for the online Identiplant course – two students – both IOSWT rangers. A few islanders have also started sending photos for ID, and I'm hoping to build up a nucleus of interested locals.

VC3 & 4 (South & North Devon)

Roger Smith (author), Bob Hodgson & Jeremy Ison

Many of the species new to Devon in 2018 are neophytes including a range of truly exotic survivors on the cliffs at Goodrington. I was astonished to see a well-grown *Banksia integrifolia* (Coast Banksia) in flower on the last day of 2018, apparently the only one so far recorded in the British Isles, during the New Year Plant Hunt organised by John Day. Other exotics worthy of mention include *Sorbus vilmorinii* (Vilmorin's Rowan) found by Pete Reay self-sown near Shipley Bridge, *Triteleia laxa* (Triplet Lily) found by Phil Pullen at Cockwood, *Corylus colurna* (Turkish Hazel) at Fremington found by Bob Kirby and *Brachypodium distachyon* (Stiff Brome) north of Bradworthy found by Mary Breeds. Less exotic but of equal interest is the record of *Rhamnus catharticus* (Buckthorn) planted at South Milton Ley found by John Day as it is almost certainly the origin of a hectad record excluded from the New Flora due to lack of evidence.

I was delighted when Hilary Marshall discovered a new population of *Ophioglossum azoricum* (Small Adder's-tongue) during my field meeting in May at the *Viola canina* (Heath Dog-violet) site on Plaster Down. Hilary found *Radiola linooides* (Allseed) in the same hollow later in the year! In VC4 the discovery of *Crassula tillaea* (Mossy Stonecrop) in the car park at Clovelly by Phil Samsun, the first North Devon record, comes hot on the heels of its recent discovery in VC3 at Dawlish Warren.

Other important records of native species include a welcome addition to the population of *Vicia orobus* (Wood Bitter-vetch) on private land at Hexworthy where I was joined by Sue Goodfellow and Andy Byfield and Andy's rediscovery of *Euphrasia vigursii* (Vigur's Eybright) on Roborough Down. It remains to be seen if John Day's discovery of *Hordeum marinum* (Sea barley) near the mouth of the River Dart is more than a casual occurrence. From North Devon a record of *Centunculus minimus* (Chaffweed) found by Rob Large is the first mainland record of this plant since 1994.

I would like to thank everyone who sent me records and to encourage all members to do the same. All records are valuable, whether or not they appear in these pages, and will add value to other publications at local and national levels. I would also like to thank the specialist referees for their time and interest.

VC 6 (North Somerset)

Helena Crouch (author) & Liz McDonnell

In 2018, over 36,000 records were made in VC6 and sent to the BSBI. Maps of species density per monad are updated regularly on the SRPG website to focus coverage of general recording. A number of active groups as well as many dedicated individuals contributed records: Somerset Rare Plants Group (SRPG), Somerset Botany Group (SBG), Cam Valley Wildlife Group (CVWG), Bath Natural History Society (BNHS) and Bristol Naturalists' Society (BNS). Thousands of records were made on field meetings: SRPG held 7 all-day field meetings in VC6 and participated in the BSBI NYPH; SBG met weekly from April to September, with 14 surveys in VC6; CVWG recorded every Wednesday evening for 23 weeks through the summer; BNS held 5 botanical field meetings in VC6; BNHS made botanical records on 2 field meetings in VC6. SRPG held 3 indoor meetings early in 2018, including a workshop on producing herbarium specimens, and also organised a well-attended field workshop on Atriplex in September. BNHS held a conifer workshop, which was extremely well-attended and BNS held an indoor plant identification workshop. In 2018 I gave talks on aspects of the Somerset flora to 6 local organisations. Progress with the Rare Plant Register is steady. I frequently update the RPR list, which can be seen on the SRPG website, together with over 200 species accounts written so far.

VCs 7 & 8 (South and North Wiltshire)

Sharon Pilkington & Richard Aisbitt

2018 presented some distinct challenges to Atlas 2020 recording in Wiltshire, not least the very hot and dry weather which meant that by early July much vegetation was parched beyond recognition and many plants could not be identified. Extensive fires and smoke from the Salisbury Plain military training area also prevented some of us filling in recording gaps there. Notwithstanding this, local recorders managed to collect around 66,000 records, a testament to their enthusiasm and determination. Now, significant gaps in recording coverage remain only in a few places that are either difficult to access (Salisbury Plain especially) or a long way from resident botanists (NW Wiltshire). Recording meetings will be held in 2019 in these areas to address this. New online tools have also been made available to Wiltshire's recorders to help them target their survey efforts. Richard Aisbitt has created maps of species record density by monad for each of the county's hectads so 'hectad adopters' can see at a glance which areas are well recorded and which need attention. As usual, many new VC records were made in the course of all this recording, including several – *Poa chaixii* (Broad-leaved Meadow-grass), *Erodium maritimum* (Sea Stork's-bill) and *Nitella translucens* (Translucent Stonewort) – from the RSPB's brand-new reserve on the edge of the New Forest (VC8). Other significant 'new' species included *Capsella rubella* (Pink Shepherd's-purse) (VC8), *Chenopodium glaucum* (Oak-leaved Goosefoot) (VC8) and *Rorippa islandica* (Northern Yellow-cress) (VC7).

VC 9 (Dorset)

Robin Walls

The Atlas 2020 recording has continued with several individuals doing sterling work in their hectads. The group recording days have targeted locations where there are clusters of squares with very few, and often zero records. DERC kindly provided us with the essential maps and most importantly for

planning, the number of records for each monad in our target area. These monthly meetings have been sufficiently well attended to split into four parties, dispersing to record and meeting up at the end of the day to compare notes and get second opinions on the identity of tricky plants (otherwise known as having a well-earned pint). Despite collecting an enormous number of records, there are still blank areas on the map to entertain us in 2019. The biggest difficulty we have encountered in many of the areas we are now tackling has been access. Some squares have no rights of way, or even a public road. Even when there is a path, it can be impossible to park the car anywhere near without blocking the lane or a field entrance. Much of these areas appear unpromising, offering little incentive to spend the time needed to get the landowner's permission to survey. Amongst the intensively farmed landscape it is only the lanes, farmyards and villages that are worth searching in any case. Nevertheless, I think we have all been surprised at what we can find even in the bleakest of squares.

The calcicolous grassland project initiated by Peter Hawes had to be abandoned due to the prolonged dry period in the summer. We met at Eggardon Hill, which had remained relatively green, to record quadrats and managed to get reasonable results, but it was hard work. Clearly it was only going to get worse as summer progressed and results might not be comparable with the earlier survey. This project aims to repeat the surveys by the Nature Conservancy in the 1960's and 70's. Earlier surveys Peter, I and Lucy Ridding from CEH had conducted in Wiltshire and Hampshire were indicating a worrying pattern of degradation in the vegetation even when the grassland had not succumbed to scrub. Typically, the sward was taller and the small plants that often require almost bare soil had been severely reduced. This was the situation everywhere, including the NNRs, which should have been properly managed. These observations also mirror results from a published survey undertaken by Peter Stroh, who revisited fixed quadrats last recorded in the 1960s by Terry Wells, Peter Hawes and others.

A personal project in 2018 was to record the pavement weeds where I live, Broadmayne. The idea was initiated by an appeal at the parish council meeting for help to clear weeds from the pavements because the village was 'untidy'. After spending a few hours tramping along fourteen of the streets, a total of 1368m, I found 103 identifiable species. Amongst these were nine tree seedlings, twenty grasses and three ferns. There were ten obvious garden escapes and no very scarce species.

VC 10 (Isle of Wight)

Colin Pope

We are on track to achieve good coverage for Atlas 2020, with the emphasis this year to record in under-recorded and non-recorded hectads that are mostly sea with small areas of land. All records have been digitised apart from one prolific recorder who keeps paper records. The Botany Group of the local Natural History Society meets regularly and is well attended. Two keen members have just enrolled on Identiplant. Interesting finds: Tim Rich has confirmed that material photographed and collected from a saltmarsh in 2006 is *Centaureum tenuiflorum* (Slender Centaury), the first confirmed record for many years. Unfortunately, the population has not been seen in recent years, the site having become overgrown. *Carex acuta* (Slender Tufted-sedge) was confirmed from Sandown marshes for the first time since 1858, where it was recorded from the same area where it still survives. Interesting garden centre weeds recorded this year have included *Geranium purpureum* (Little-Robin), *Cyperus fuscus* (Brown Galingale), *Chloris radiata* (Radiate Fingergrass) and *Eclipta prostrata* (False Daisy).

VC 11 & 12 (South and North Hampshire)

Martin Rand (VC 11) & Tony Mundell (VC 12)

2018 was the last year in which the Hampshire VCRs were concentrating on square-bashing for Atlas 2020. I'm developing new online facilities to support this year's thrust, chasing up hectads where there are post-1970 records but none since 1999. We've continued digitising pre-1999 records from maps in the 1996 Flora of Hampshire, and volunteers finished entering up many post-2000 New Forest records. It's unusual to get a new VC record for a native nowadays, but *Equisetum x willmotii* was notable. As usual, there were several new aliens. We had concerns over the future of the HCMS collections when all specialist curator staff were made redundant in the New Year. Fortunately, this now looks fairly settled and both VC recorders are working to raise the profile of the herbarium with the Cultural Trust who manage it. The curator has moved to Portsmouth City and is working to bring their natural science collections out of obscurity. There are 18,000 uncatalogued herbarium sheets with lots of Hampshire and Sussex material which we look forward to scrutinising. Hampshire's field programme was rather curtailed by the weather. I had to cancel one meeting because of extreme heat and grass fires. A Charophyte workshop hopefully stimulated more interest in this group, leading to better recording. I'm working on an online Supplement for the 1996 county Flora, and an early incarnation with limited content (a few species accounts) can be viewed at <https://hantsplants.pythonanywhere.com/fohsupp/default/index>. I've now secured its funding for web site hosting for the next two years.

Hampshire (VC11 + VC12) has a website at <https://hantsplants.org.uk> that assigns survey priorities to each tetrad at the start of each recording year. In 2018 I spent 55 days surveying 55 VC12 tetrads in the company of one or two other botanists. Others have also contributed records so that over 17,000 VC12 records were added for 2018. This is less than the peak of over 37,000 in 2015 but that is partly because we now often use customised tetrad recording sheets that omit taxa already refound from 2000 onwards. Many thousands of old records collected prior to the 1996 Flora of Hampshire were also added during 2018 and, of course, this has had a negative effect on our re-find rates. Nearly all of the 12 complete hectads wholly within VC12 now have over 1,000 taxa ever recorded. The lowest is SU64 with 985 taxa and the highest is SU73 with 1,734. The Hampshire Flora Group holds many field meetings or plant identification workshops each year, and in 2018 I led three field trips; at Ackender Wood for spring woodland flora, at Malshanger Estate for arable plants - including the only persistent British site for *Legousia speculum-veneris* (Large Venus's-looking-glass) - and Longmoor for heathland rarities. I also help to organise our annual December exhibition meeting which includes showing herbarium voucher specimens collected in the year. Work is just starting on an online supplement to the 1996 Flora of Hampshire, masterminded by Martin Rand, but with contributions from several others.

VC 13 & 14 (East and West Sussex)

Matt Berry

Unfortunately, the VCR positions for both Sussex vice-counties have yet to be filled and this has meant that the processing/sharing of records has slowed, if not quite stalled, since publication of the recent Flora. For a variety of reasons, my role has had to be limited to the receiving and vetting of records and fielding of queries, and this is very unlikely to change until a replacement or replacements for Mike Shaw and Paul Harmes is/are found. SBRS member, Judith Linsell, has volunteered to help with the processing of records and use of Map Mate, with the assistance of

Mike Shaw, and with botanical support from myself. NCRs included *Scleranthus annuus* subsp. *polycarpus* (Annual Knawel), and most astonishingly *Bunium bulbocastanum* (Great Pignut), in habitat that suggests an overlooked native. Significant adventive records included NCRs for *Datura innoxia* (Recurved Thorn-apple) and *Gypsophila muralis* (Annual Gypsophila); and a record of *Thladiantha dubia* (Manchu Tuber-gourd), apparently new to Britain and Ireland.

VC 15 & 16 (East and West Kent)

Geoffrey Kitchener (VC 15 & 16) & Sue Buckingham (VC 15)

Recent Kent recording is reported in Kent Botany 2018, on the BSBI's Kent webpage. Highlights for 2018 included;

- *Alopecurus x plettkei*, found to be widespread over the north Kent grazing marshes.
- The sole Kentish location for putative native *Arum italicum* subsp. *neglectum*, last noted in the 1960s, was rediscovered.
- *Erophila majuscula* (Hairy Whitlowgrass), first found in Kent (and Britain) in 1724, and hardly recorded since in the county, has been reported from Lullingstone and Orpington.
- Endangered species *Lactuca saligna* (Least Lettuce) is credited with a previously unknown population at Allhallows Marshes.
- *Turritis glabra* (Tower Mustard), last seen in Kent in 1958, has been found flourishing by Lesnes Abbey ruins.

A surprising find was *Lithospermum arvense* (Field Gromwell), having had a reversal of fortunes as an arable weed and now being grown as a specialist crop in its own right, its seeds yielding oil used in health food supplements. Twenty taxa new to East Kent (vc 15) and four new to West Kent (vc 16) were recorded. The county recording group has continued recording for Atlas 2020, holding 16 field meetings during 2018, including sessions held jointly with the BSBI, Kent Field Club, Surrey Botanical Society and Sussex Botanical Recording Society. Themed meetings to encourage identification skills were held on glassworts, grasses and willows. 69,000 records were added to the database in 2018. The rare plant register is now drafted as far as Part N (on-line) and Q (off-line); annual revision of completed parts continues.

VC 17 (Surrey)

Ann Sankey

Good progress has been made towards Atlas 2020. There are 11 whole- and 22 part-hectads of varying sizes in VC17. In total, 340 taxa were recorded in 2018 that were new hectad records. The new taxa are a mix of native species, subspecies and hybrid plus a good number of non-native ones. Included in this figure are the following new VC17 records: *Alnus rubra* (Red Alder), *Carex acuta* x *nigra*, *Chenopodium acerifolium*, *Chenopodium giganteum* (Tree Spinach), *Chenopodium strictum* (Striped Goosefoot), *Chenopodium suecicum* (Swedish Goosefoot), *Gnaphalium purpureum* (American Cudweed), *Miscanthus sinensis* (Chinese Silver-grass), *Myosotis* x *suzae* (*M. laxa* x *scorpioides*), *Pastinaca sativa* subsp. *urens* (Eastern Parsnip), *Perovskia atriplicifolia* (Russian Sage), *Ranunculus baudotii* (Brackish Water-crowfoot) – first since 1901, *Sorbaria kirilowii* (Chinese Sorbaria). Our recording continues to be site based within monads. There are now only 5 fringe monads with no records. There are just 6 monads with less than 20 recorded taxa. We also have 114

monads with over 300 taxa. We have 774,236 records in MapMate, sent to the DDb. We have some lists from external sources that still need to be databased. There are some older individual records still to database. Recording is based on field meetings organised by Surrey Botanical Society, with 15 formal meetings arranged, plus those organised by LNHS. There were a good number of informal meetings. The bulk of the new records were made by individuals out recording on a very regular basis. The Surrey Rare Plant Register is almost finished.

VC 18 & 19 (South and North Essex)

Ken Adams

Essex monad database now stands at 820,000 records (26,600 added in 2018). Essex Botany 8 (Autumn 2018) published. Highlights: *Carex filiformis* (Downy-fruited Sedge) and *Lotus angustissimus* (Slender Bird's-foot-trefoil) new to Essex. Now about half way with mapping MOD Shoeburyness 50 monads. Sad to report death of Tim Pyner, a prolific field recorder and fern expert, at 59. Have taken 5 FSC courses on vascular plant I.D. and two talks during year.

VC 24 (Buckinghamshire)

Andy McVeigh & Roy Maycock

Survey activity during 2018 produced records for 86 tetrads across 22 hectads. Coverage in the southern and central sections of the county has progressed exceptionally well, efforts here during 2019 shall focus on re-finds for those species without post-2000 records, and where feasible obtaining post-2010 observations for notable species. In the north, survey will focus on hectads in the west and north-west, in particular SP61, 62, 63, 64, 73 & 74. Interesting finds from 2018 include several NCR's - *Orobancha hederæ* (Ivy Broomrape), *Asplenium x clermontiae* (*A. ruta-muraria* x *trichomanes*), accompanied by work on critical taxa which has produced NCR's for the Dandelions *Taraxacum coartatum*, *T. insigne*, and *T. tumentilobum*. A second locality was also discovered for the scarce *Hieracium prominentidens* (Large-toothed Hawkweed). Thank you to all for their contributions. Atlas 2020 digitisation and validation - there remains a considerable amount to be done here, but the good news is some 150,000 records are in the pipeline for transfer to the DDb. However, before this can be done further checks and 'housekeeping' duties need to be undertaken. A draft Axiophyte list has been prepared and it is hoped this can be finalised in the coming months. Involvement with the Local Sites Project (LSP) and Local Record Centre continues, providing support with field survey and identification – a dataset containing some 10,000 records is currently being prepared for loading on to MapMate. Discussions are underway with the County Museum to deposit herbaria specimens, and future plans include increasing the number of specimens for critical taxa to build a local reference collection.

VC 25 & 26 (East and West Suffolk)

Martin Sanford

Good progress has been made on Atlas 2020 recording; one or two hectads still have rather low totals post 2000 and will need visits this year.

VC 27 (East Norfolk)

Bob Ellis

Norfolk Flora Group held 27 field meetings and 6 workshops (Subspecies, Alliums, Brambles, Yellow composites, Yellow crucifers, Pondweeds) across the two vice-counties. 18,737 records were collected and entered into MapMate for vc27. This is down on the 32,683 in 2017 because of more targeted recording and a greater emphasis on vc28 with the Flora Group. Some positive results from targeted recording for the year included:

- *Carduus tenuiflorus* (Slender Thistle) re-found for hectad TG40 on the north bank of Breydon Waer
- *Carex distans* (Distant Sedge) re-found for hectad TG42 on the south-west side of Hickling Broad NNR
- *Drosera rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Sundew) re-found for hectad TG41 at Potter Heigham Mashes
-

Some oddities for the year included:

- *Diploaxis eruroides* (White Wallrocket) turned up at Cley
- *Epilobium brachycarpum* (Autumn Willowherb) was found at Sprowston - the second record for the vice-county
- *Gnaphalium luteoalbum* (Jersey Cudweed) appeared Felthorpe at the edge of deep ruts after forestry work.
-

VC29 (Cambridgeshire)

Jonathan Shanklin

All tetrads in v.c.29 now have a 75% re-find rate for Atlas 2020 based on the count of old+new species, and with at least 120 species per tetrad. A few have more than 90 species yet to be re-found. Four hectads haven't made it to 75%, reflecting the lower resolution of older records and the loss of the habitat in which the missing species occurred. It should be possible to get at least two of these to 75%. Many older records have not been digitised. This particularly applies to records in the county card index, and to some records in the on-line Cambridgeshire Flora. The RPR and RPCC have been updated and revised. Comparing post 2000 records with pre 2000 records has revealed that many species, particularly aquatics, are in significant decline in the county. Some details were shown on a poster at the AEM, with further details in the county newsletter and in Nature in Cambridgeshire. Alan Leslie has sent his Flora of Cambridgeshire to the publishers and it should come out in 2019. Ten local field meetings took place during the year, visiting a mix of interesting sites and areas in need of records for Atlas 2020. Further details are in the county newsletter. Jonathan Shanklin gave one talk to the Ely U3A group. A brief account of significant finds is in the county newsletter, with a longer account in Nature in Cambridgeshire.

VC 30 (Bedfordshire)

John Wakely

2018 was spent searching for species not recorded since 2000. For a number of these, historical six-figure grid references are available. 13 Flora group field trips were organised and records from these were supplemented by those from a handful of individuals. Significant progress has been made and there are now just a few hectads to be targeted in 2019. Loss of suitable habitat appears to be the commonest reason for failure, together with deterioration in water quality for some aquatic species. Somewhat depressing losses have been balanced by some interesting and unusual finds. In addition to looking for rarer plants, field trips have encouraged the less experienced botanists and we are delighted to have added some young ecologists to the (Beds Natural History Society) Flora group. No NCRs were recorded in 2018.

VC31 (Huntingdonshire)

David Broughton

Recording activities in 2018 have continued to build knowledge of the current status of the Huntingdonshire flora, with particularly notable (in terms of volume of records and efforts in an under-recorded landscape) contributions from the Fenland Flora project. A recent project by the Huntingdonshire Fauna and Flora Society to record the orchids of the county has also come to an end, providing records for the New Atlas and a new book. While recording efforts over the last 10 years are yet to replicate the 30-year dataset presented in the county flora, good progress has been made to meet New Atlas objectives and the number of species known for the county has continued to increase year on year. Primarily this is a result of better recording of garden escapes, casuals and plantings in the wider landscape, but new natives (both overlooked and recent colonists) are still being found. Records of note for 2018 include the rediscovery of *Potamogeton gramineus* (Various-leaved Pondweed) and *Bromus secalinus* (Rye Brome), the NCR of *Equisetum x litorale* (Shore Horsetail), and the ongoing evidence of spread or better recording of previously rare or poorly known species such as *Anthriscus caucalis* (Bur Chervil), *Galeopsis bifida* (Bifid Hemp-nettle) and *Calystegia sepium* subsp. *roseata* (Hedge Bindweed). Curiosities include the additions of *Capsella rubella* (Pink Shepherd's-purse), *Euphorbia maculata* (Spotted Spurge), and a very well-established *Vitis vinifera* (Grape-vine). Less welcome is evidence of the ongoing spread and dominance of *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* (Floating Pennywort) in watercourses along the valley of the Great Ouse.

VC32 (Northamptonshire)

Alyson Freeman and Brian Laney

Thanks to the coordinating efforts of Rob Wilson and Gill Gent, Atlas recording has all but been completed. Rob and Gill both died in 2018, and they are missed greatly by the botanical community. They leave a legacy of two County Floras, the protection of many sites, and a wealth of experience that was passed down to those who continue to record and appreciate the flora of the county.

Northants Flora Group events in 2018 produced a number of great finds. *Orchis anthropophora* (Man Orchid) was refound at Ufford village, last recorded from the same tetrad over 100 years ago, and noted in Druce's Flora of Northants in 1930. The rosettes were protected from damage by a small

cage, and later flowered. And a small population of *Spiranthes spiralis* (Autumn Lady's-tresses) was found growing on a mossy mown grass strip in, of all places, an industrial estate at Banbury.

We've been busy trying to refind and update Gill Gent's record of *Cephalanthera damasonium* (White Helleborine) at Evenley Woodland Garden, and whilst searching, BL found 22 seed heads of *Monotropa hypopitys* (Yellow Bird's-nest), a remarkable find for the county, and a new record for the hectad. The species has only ever been recorded from a very few localities, and was last seen in the county in 2002 at Wakerley wood.

At a meeting at Deene, near Corby, Jean Emeny spotted a young rosette of *Hyoscyamus niger* (Henbane), and in total eight rosettes were seen along the edge of a field by a stone wall. It is hoped that some may flower in 2019. A few years ago, one of us (BL) found *Jasione montana* (Sheep's-bit), very rare in the county and not seen for over 50 years. Eleven rosettes were counted at the time at Newnham Hill near Daventry. An enclosure was put around the rosettes and flowering plants were recorded in 2018. *Galium parisiense* (Wall Bedstraw) was found in several new locations, many in industrial estates.

Great finds are possible at any time of the year, and in December BL found two NCRs: a single plant of *Malva parviflora* (Least Mallow) in a fence-line by a new supermarket off the A4500 at Northampton, and *Malva verticillata* (Chinese Mallow) outside Kettering Electrical Store and by a red post box, found by chance whilst stopping to get Christmas stamps! And a good population of *Sison segetum* (Corn Parsley) was found by BL along the edge of a spinney on arable edge in the south of the county near Croughton.

All are welcome to attend the Flora Group meetings – just get in touch with Alyson (alysonfreeman0@gmail.com).

VC34 (West Gloucestershire)

Clive Lovatt

During the year the vacancy for a BSBI recorder for VC33 East Gloucestershire was filled. Meanwhile, the VC34 recorder, Clive Lovatt moved from Bristol to Stroud at the end of July, three minutes' walk inside VC33! With continuing efforts from the main Gloucestershire recorders, Clare and Mark Kitchen (former BSBI VC Recorders for both vice counties), John Rees and Clive Lovatt, we managed over 50,000 Gloucestershire records input into the DDb - our highest-ever total. Recognising that VC33 was less well covered, all of us gravitated there, collecting over 28,000 records whilst VC34 slipped back to 22,000, below the best of 2017. In 2019 we will survey the dozen or so tetrads shown in pale or white on BSBI's useful tetrad 'heat maps'. About 20 meetings have been planned in Gloucestershire, mostly through the Plant Group of the Gloucestershire Naturalists Society. There are six probable new VC34 records – casual or established aliens. My most memorable find was casual *Isatis tinctoria* (Woad), one of many recently rarely seen plants that turned up beside a new cycle track on the fringes of Avonmouth. Digitisation of off-card records from my notebooks and herbarium should be complete within the year. I will be attending a validation workshop in Somerset later this year. I prepared an outline county RPR list using BSBI methodology during an Arctic cruise. We will consider working on it properly in the 2020-2025 window.

VC 39 (Staffordshire)

John Hawksford

All records received have been entered into MapMate and, hence, the BSBI Distribution database. There were 16,209 of them. 16 individuals provided substantial lists; 7 shorter ones; and 22 a few records. There are 49 hectads or part-hectads in the vice county. Minimum (75% refind) targets have been achieved for 44 of them; only one of the remainder (SK14) has not quite reached this for its tetrad target (20% of tetrads reaching 75%); the others (SK04, SK22, SO78 & SP08) just fall short for the hectad target. Thus 2019 priorities are obvious. The vast majority of validation has been completed for the priority categories: boundary matches, singleton anomalies, rarities and altitude ranges. The Annual Plant Report; Revision of the Rare Plant Register; Revision of the Checklist; and a Flora of Staffordshire, 2011 update have been prepared and posted on the BSBI website. Plant identification and other queries received in e-mails and the post have all been answered in detail. Detailed comparisons and collaboration have been undertaken with the work of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Survey Teams. *Drosera anglica* (Great Sundew) was found in valley mire, Gentleshaw Common, SK0511; *Eriophorum latifolium* (Broad-leaved Cottongrass) at Spout Moss, Reap's Moor, SK0760. These were the first records for the VC since 1969 and 1884, respectively.

VC 53 (South Lincolnshire)

Sarah Lambert & Malcolm Pool

We've exceeded our minimum target of five well-recorded tetrads per hectad, and are now aiming for ten. Despite this level of recording a number of hectads are still below the 75% threshold level. I've entered just under 27,000 records for 2018 so far. When Fen Flora data has been entered, we'll have in excess of 40,000 records. I've received records from 15 individuals, comprising 1077 taxa from 34 hectads. I've also processed and entered approximately half of the Lincolnshire LWS survey data covering the period 2008-2010. The South Lincolnshire Flora Group (SLFG) now has 55 people on the mailing list and 46 members of the Facebook group. We held nine field meetings including visits to urban areas, ancient woodland, acid grassland, wetlands and limestone grassland, and a lively New Year Plant Hunt. We also held a winter social and planning meeting in February. The SLFG supports the 'Love Lincs Plants' project. The SLFG collected over 120 herbarium specimens in 2018. I've also floated the idea of a Rare Plants register and new 'Flora of Lincolnshire' with the LNU, and work towards this will provide a continued focus for the SLFG after 2019. The most exciting new species in 2018 was *Fumaria reuteri* (Martin's Ramping-fumitory) in Stamford Cemetery, new to Lincolnshire. I'm working with Stamford Town Council to ensure this species is conserved. Other notable finds include the first record of *Capsella rubella* (Pink Shepherd's-purse) in VC53. Reports of field trips and some of the more interesting finds are publicised in our newsletter which is circulated to all members in spring.

VC 55 (Leicestershire)

Geoffrey Hall, Russell Parry & Steve Woodward

Our strategy was to complete the minimum Atlas requirement of five well-recorded tetrads per hectad. We needed to record 43 tetrads, many in the eastern half of the county. We organised a four-day meeting at Rutland Water and also targeted specific hectads in our individual and local

group meetings. We didn't quite manage it, and we still have 17 tetrads left to complete for 2019. Local recorders added 33,433 records in 358 tetrads to the database and the prospect of a new flora is tempting. The Leicestershire Botanical Recording Group made seven visits, mainly to areas where permissive paths and open access were due to expire, and also enjoyed a social evening with a meal at a pub in Leicester. A highlight was a visit to the British Gypsum works at Barrow on Soar, a site rich in calcareous grassland species. The opportunity to wear hard-hats, hi-vis vests, safety glasses and steel toe-cap wellies while botanising was an unexpected bonus. A New Year's Day plant hunt was organised in December. We ensured that the group's electronic communications were GDPR-compliant, and created procedures to ensure that our field meetings complied with public liability insurance; tedious jobs, but they had the unexpected consequence of improving the way local meetings are organised and advertised. We gave several talks to local organisations, wrote articles on local flora for the Leicestershire & Rutland Recorder, joined an advisory group for the local record centre, and worked with the local Wildlife Trust on a Heritage Lottery bid.

VC 56 (Nottinghamshire)

David Wood and Mark Woods

More than 60,000 records have been added. Same group of recorders as 2017 with significant contributions from new recorder, Gareth Hirons. Database validation - not validated common species or reliable records, but edited erroneous grid references, checked records located on VC boundaries. Rarities and notables have been confirmed, but these were already checked (mostly) on mapmate. 1st Records: *Artemisia maritima*, *Bidens ferulifolia*, *Crocus pulchellus*, *Dianthus caryophyllus*, *Echium pininana*, *Elaeagnus x submacrophylla*, *Erophila majuscula*, *Isatis tinctoria*, *Matthiola longipetala*, *Nassella tenuissima*, *Orobanche hederarum*, *Rorippa x armoracioides*, *Rumex x heteranthos*, *Vicia lutea*, *Amaranthus caudatus*, *Asarina procumbens*, *Mentha requienii*, *Sutera cordata*, *Trifolium incarnatum* subsp. *incarnatum*. Historical Information: Graeme Coles and Sian Matthews are in the processing of checking first records for the county. Some of the information provided in the 1963 Flora appears to be erroneous.

VC 57 (Derbyshire)

Alan Willmot

Recording for the new Atlas has gone well this year. Derbyshire covers 42 whole or part hectads. Last year we reached 24 green hectads with 18 yellow ones. Now we have achieved 32 green ones leaving only 10 yellow to complete. To reach the green level a 75% refind rate is needed. Of the remaining ten yellow hectads, eight have over a 70% refind rate with the remaining two at 67 and 65% respectively. Hopefully it may be possible in this survey year to convert most of the yellow hectads to green during our organised Flora Group meetings. However, in the case of hectads SK14 and SK15 this may not be possible. In the former because this is where the former vice-county recorder Miss Hollick lived and in the latter because of the 53 species of Dandelions previously recorded there. Around 34,000 records were received during the year of which all but a few hundred have been digitised and passed on to the Distribution Database. About 20,000 records have been flagged as requiring confirmation of which around 17,000 have been validated. During the year a series of nine field meetings of our local Flora Group were organised. Most were directed towards completing coverage for the new Atlas but a few were organised simply to areas of botanical

interest. These meetings and the efforts of others resulted in the recording of a number of new plants. These were mostly neophytes such as *Lonicera involucrata* (Californian Honeysuckle) but included *Rumex palustris* (Marsh Dock) which is probably a native despite its sporadic occurrence.

VC 59 & 60 (South and North Lancashire)

David Earl

In addition to general recording, Biobank, GMEU and rECOrd supplied extracts from their vascular datasets from which many thousands of additional tetrad resolution records will be imported to the South Lancashire Flora dataset during 2019. Excursions included a winter twigs identification session at Stanley Park, Blackpool with John Poland; exploring the Wyre Valley at Scorton led by Mary Dean; an exploration of the shore and adjoining arable fields at Hale with the Liverpool Botanical Society and a trip to the Rochdale Canal at Todmorden with the Manchester Field Club together with members of the Royal Society of Biology where we found an established patch of *Silene chalcedonica* (Maltese-cross) new to South Lancashire. The most interesting find of the year was however made by Peter Jepson this being the discovery of *Alchemilla monticola* above Belmont. The BSBI Exhibition Meeting <https://bsbi.org/annual-exhibition-meeting> was held at Edge Hill and also during the autumn a collection of over 340 specimens gathered during 1942 by Dorothy Harker was donated to LERN. Dorothy was a pupil at Lancaster Girls' Grammar School and it thought that most of the specimens might have been gathered from the Lancaster District. The year finished with recording for the BSBI New Year's Hunt began on 29th December 2018 and with an exceptionally mild winter over 150 species were found to be in flower.

VC 61 (South-East Yorkshire)

Richard Middleton & Peter Cook

Our Local Group has met on six occasions at venues chosen to provide a wide range of habitats and species records to both fill gaps for Atlas 2020 and re-find and update our Rare Plants Register. Some of the more interesting finds were, however, submitted by visitors to the VC with new extant records for *Agrimonia procera* (Fragrant Agrimony) and *Sonchus palustris* (Marsh Sow-thistle) added to our RPR. Some BSBI botanists are also members of the Hull Natural History Society which has successfully completed mapping the vascular flora of Beverley on a monad basis with some intriguing finds including *Carduus tenuiflorus* (Slender Thistle), a rare plant in VC61. Both Hull and Beverley have been studied in this way and it has proved more inspiring than tetrad surveying, especially in older members. The British Pteridological Society held their AGM in Hull where interest was shown in the substantial population of *Asplenium marinum* (Sea Spleenwort), known since 2004 near the Hull marina. Subsequently a more detailed study by Local Group member Gabrielle Jarvis counted 57 plants. In addition to continued Atlas 2020 tetrad recording members John Killingbeck has written "An inventory of native and exotic conifers" and Peter Cook "A checklist of stonewort records". Field work in the VC is active and the work and data contribution of the Hull Natural History Society has been invaluable.

VC 62 (North-East Yorkshire)

Vincent Jones & Dave Barlow

In 2018 we have concentrated on tetrads which have had few or no recent records. In VC62 this has included farmland near the A19 road in the west of the vc. All of the coastal tetrads have been completed. During 2019 we intend to attempt to cover the gaps to give as comprehensive cover as possible.

VC 63 (South-West Yorkshire)

Louise Hill & Kay McDowell

Recording in data gaps progressed in 2018. I'm still getting to know my area and botanists as I'm not originally from West Yorkshire. In 2018 recording trips with Halifax Scientific Society continued. I went out recording with the South Yorkshire Botany Group on three trips to Saddleworth Moor. This year we'll meet up with the Saddleworth Naturalists for the first time for a recording day. I've recruited a friend to record with in the Leeds area. I spent a day with Jesse Tregale getting to know the 'aliens' sites in Bradford. I've joined the Bradford Biodiversity Partnership. I spent an enjoyable day recording with Jonathan Shanklin near Skipton. Michael Wilcox found an alien rush at Mickleton Ings, south Leeds. I helped to designate a new SINC site in North Yorks containing hundreds of twayblades and common spotted orchids and seven species of sedges with Bruce Brown. More recording trips set up for this season for Saddleworth Moor and also Greenfields where a site is at risk of development. I'm planning a meeting with the Yorkshire Naturalist's Union for next year. I'm also planning to set up a blog with help from a South Yorkshire Botany Group member.

VC 64 (Mid-West Yorkshire)

David Broughton

2018 was another good year for recording with over 16,000 records added to the BSBI database. Mid-West Yorkshire continues to benefit from a diverse contribution from visiting and local botanists with a range of interests, and a number of active local recording societies. Of the latter, specific thanks must go to the Wharfedale Naturalists for both their regular large contribution of records, and the care taken to provide records of the highest quality. Coverage for the New Atlas is good. Certain species have proven challenging to re-find but, counter to this, new insights are being made into the current composition of the county flora. One of the benefits of the long period of hot dry weather was that lake drawdown zones were extensive, with an excellent season for recording their special interest. I, with help from Mike Wilcox, have been taking an interest in the lakes along the Aire Valley, and this year has further resolved the under-appreciated botanical importance of flooded former colliery sites along the urban fringe of Leeds. The best find was *Limosella aquatica* (Mudwort), with the same lake providing *Lythrum hyssopifolia* (Grass-poly) just over the county boundary in VC63. Other interesting records include the first Yorkshire record of *Mitella ovalis* (Oval-leaved Mitrewort), NCR including *Acaena anserinifolia x inermis*, *Crataegus pentagyna* (Five-seeded Hawthorn), *Primula pulverulenta* (Red Cowslip), *Rubus canadensis* (Thornless Blackberry), *Clematis tangutica* (Orange-peel Clematis) and *Aralia elata* (Japanese Angelica-tree). Also of great interest, *Asarum europaeum* (Asarabacca) was re-found by Howard Beck after an absence of 137 years.

VC 65 (North-West Yorkshire)

Linda Robinson

We had a good year recording in 2018 but it was very disappointing on the Orchid monitoring front. The extremely warm and dry summer meant that a lot of Orchid species did not show or we saw just the occasional plant. We are hoping for better results in 2019. Some of the more notable finds this year were:

Hymenophyllum wilsonii (Wilson's Filmy-fern) – Judith Allinson turned up one of the best finds of the year on 27th June, under a huge riverside boulder on the edge of the River Rawthey below Uldale House. This was a new tetrad record in SD72.96

Hieracium bakeranum (Baker's Hawkweed) – Two plants had flowered and seeded on the riverside above Wynch Bridge when visited on the 1st October. There were three plants last year and this year's two plants are probably the last ones on the Planet. I did a thorough search of the cliffs and river edge and may have found a few more plants but we need to wait till later this year to get this confirmed. NY89.28. Definitely rarer than Hen's back teeth.

Lathraea clandestina (Purple Toothwort) – This alien species was spotted by Brian Burrow on the bank of the Ure above Boroughbridge on 5th May, quite a large patch (c. 1m diameter) growing on the roots of a Crack Willow, another 4 smaller patches were then spotted by myself and Brian a few metres upstream. This is a first record for v.c.65. SE37.66.

Samolus valerandii (Brookweed) – On 18th July this was seen by Jim Parkin and myself in two new monads on the shore of a lagoon in the new extension to Nosterfield Reserve. This was the first new record since 1969. SE27.80 and SE28.80

Urtica dioica subsp. *galeopsifolia* (Stingless Nettle) – An excellent record from Fal Sarker, a good patch found on Hayberries Nature Reserve in Teesdale on 2nd September, a first record for v.c.65. NY99.22

To see details of Field Meetings in this vice-county please go to: <https://bsbi.org/north-west-yorkshire> and look at the Newsletter for 2019.

VC 67 (South Northumberland)

John Richards & Quentin Groom

Recording for Atlas 2020 continued at a steady albeit unspectacular pace in South Northumberland, some 5,000 records being added from about 30 tetrads in 2018. No less than eight new county records were logged, and although five of these referred to hybrids, we regret the apparent decision to abandon the published lists of NCRs. The highlights of our season concerned the discovery of excellent new locations for two of our flagship plants; two new sites for the fast-disappearing *Crepis mollis* (Northern Hawk's-beard), and a magnificent and accessible locality for *Eleocharis mamillata*, surely the finest in the country. There were several indications of the effects of climate change; at a reclaimed grassland reserve in greater Newcastle, *Centaurea debauxii* appeared to be the only knapweed present (NCR), while *Polygonum rurivagum* (Cornfield Knotgrass) continues to invade our salted road verges, often at considerable altitude. The discovery of a fine field margin population of *Bromus commutatus* (Meadow Brome) was another NCR. It was good to have a chance to consider the richness of our Oraches (Atriplex) in a BSBI field meeting, although in a less-than-optimal year for

this group of annuals, and with disappointingly few attendees. Finally, thanks to BSBI News for allowing us to show off our botanical wares in the first of the County Round-ups!

VC 68 (North Northumberland)

Chris Metherell

Little to report. We're concentrating on re-finding old hectad records which may have been missed during tetrad surveying. However, as our re-find rate is currently 85% overall this is proving something of a challenge.

VC 69 & 70 (Westmorland & Cumberland)

Mike Porter, Jeremy Roberts & Phill Brown

Recording has moved on well with more than 90,000 records added - 64,000 from work in 2018, covering 775 tetrads, and 30,000 records unearthed from earlier years. The main aim of our recording was to achieve the 5 well-recorded tetrads per hectad required for Atlas 2020. To do this we targeted 74 fairly well recorded tetrads and by the end of the season had raised 63 of them to "well-recorded". We also put much work into poorly recorded hectads. We tackled recording by various means: a pre-season planning meeting and 5 field meetings in under-recorded areas, a full week of recording in an inaccessible area, and, as always, by the hard, repeated efforts of individual recorders and informal groups. The bulk of our recording was done by members of The Flora of Cumbria Recording Group, but members of our Cumbria Botany Facebook Group now numbering over 300, mostly non-BSBI members, were also involved. Both groups participated in the New Year Plant Hunt and also in our local Snowdrop Hunt. We plan to begin work on the updating of the Rare Plant Register and the Flora of Cumbria after the completion of field work for Atlas 2020. Our best records were the hybrid orchid *Dactylorhiza* × *viridella* (NCR) near Orton (Sean Cole), *Polypogon viridis* (Water Bent) (NCR) near Mawbray (Mike Porter), *Cardamine heptaphylla* (NCR) near Kendal (Ann Boucher) and two significant first records since 2000 both by Phill Brown - *Stellaria pallida* (Lesser Chickweed) at Southwaite Services on the M6 and *Silene gallica* (Small-flowered Catchfly) near Barrow.

VC 113 (Sark)

Susan Synnott

Three plants new to Sark, one being *Primula veris* (Cowslip) and another a hybrid growing beside it (*P. vulgaris* × *P. veris* = *P. x polyantha*), located on a grassy area on a headland, far from gardens. Originally laid out as a helipad about eight years ago, but the owner never got permission to use it. The third was *Euphorbia amygdaloides ssp robbiae*, located outside the wall of a garden. Some years ago, there was another escape from this garden, *Inula helenium* (Elecampane), which persists to this day. It is probable that the *Euphorbia* will too!

Ongoing maintenance of the wet valley path means *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Heath Spotted-orchid) has recovered very well in the last year or two, numbering 22 this year. Winter clearance of Blackthorn at the entrance to L'Eperquerie to open up the vista resulted in regeneration of a variety of wild flowers. The clearance of Gorse near Pilcher Monument to help restore the Heather is also

ongoing winter work. Spring work on Harbour hill path clearing brambles and other vegetation helped to restore *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell) hidden underneath.

La Société Jersiaise came on a day trip. Of particular note was a visit to the damp field at the north of the island where *Glyceria fluitans* (Floating Sweet-grass), *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* (Marsh Pennywort), *Ranunculus flammula* (Lesser Spearwort), *Isolepis setacea* (Bristle Club-rush), *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel), *Carex demissa* (Common Yellow-sedge) attracted special attention. This visit proved very useful and timely, as rumour had it that the new owner was about to dig up the field, as he considered it “unsightly”. However, a letter explaining its interest, and conversation with him, has hopefully diverted this disaster!

VC 113 (Jersey)

Anne Haden

Many gaps on the island were filled in during the year for Atlas recording and despite all our tetrads being marked as well recorded on the Ddb there are yet more gaps to be filled. Outings were held regularly through the summer months and a day trip to Sark was arranged to explore the island. 2018 was the year of the *Chenopodium* in Jersey. *Chenopodium rubrum* (Red Goosefoot) was thought of as rare and had not been recorded for 30 years, however in 2018 it was found in four locations. *C. hybridum* (Maple-leaved Goosefoot) was spotted hiding among a large clump of *C. album* (Fat-hen) by an eagle-eyed ranger and then *C. strictum* (NCR) was spotted near the airport. Another NCR was *Carduus crispus* (Wetted Thistle) that appeared by a newly created cycle path. A nice find was *Barbarea vulgaris* (Winter-cress) found by a fireman who works at the airport and has access to perimeter grasslands. An Identiplant student, he was unaware that the plant had not been recorded for 40 years.

VC 113 (Guernsey)

Helen Litchfield

It was with some trepidation and only with the promise of support from the Botany Section of La Société Guernesiaise that I was honoured to accept the post of Vice County Recorder for Guernsey, Channel Isles. As a group, we meet frequently to study and record our local flora and 2018 was a typically busy year. In May we welcomed a group of botanists from Bradford, who spent a very active week on the island recording all manner of plants, including some new records for Guernsey. These included *Hypericum linarifolium* x *humifusum* (Hybrid St John’s-wort), found on our south facing cliffs next to patches of the enchanting *Viola kitaibeliana* (Dwarf Pansy) and the re-found *Juncus foliosus* (Leafy Rush) found in our Orchid field reserves. Also re-found this year, after an absence of four years, was the diminutive *Exaculum pusillum* (Guernsey Centaury) in an area known as ‘Boggy Hollow’ on L’Ancrese Common. Also new in 2018 was *Parapholis incurva* (Curved Hard-grass) found in a seemingly hostile environment of stones and spoil along the west coast. A personal favourite of mine, *Selaginella kraussiana* (Krauss’s Clubmoss) continues to spread along the banks of a stream running through Fermain Valley.