



Irish Botanical News

No. 24

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Editor: Paul R. Green



Crambe maritima (Sea-kale) at Kilshannig point, Co. Kerry.
Photo: Hannah Mulcahy © 2013. See page 12.



Chamerion angustifolium (Rosebay Willowherb).
Photo: Jackie O'Connell © 2013. See page 15.

The following is the Committee as elected at the Annual General Meeting at Knockreer House, Killarney, Co. Kerry on 14 September, 2013. Office bearers were subsequently elected at the first committee meeting. The Committee is now:

Mr G. Sharkey (Chairman and ROI Representative to
Records Committee and interim Hon. Treasurer)
Dr J.S. Faulkner (Vice-Chairman and Field Secretary)
Mrs F. Devery (Hon. Secretary)
Mr R.H. Northridge (NI Representative to Records
Committee)
Dr D. Doogue
Mrs S.C.P. Reynolds
Dr M. Sheehy-Skeffington

The following are nominated observers to the committee:

Mr M. Wright (EHS NI)
Dr M.B. Wyse-Jackson (NPWS ROI)

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Front cover photo: *Chamerion angustifolium* (Rosebay Willowherb). Photo: Jackie O'Connell © 2013. See page 15.

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Editorial

With the 'Irish Species Project' (see page 10) on the way I thought I would try out my MapMate skills and see if I could produce a picture map of one of the species that is hoped to be surveyed over the next two years. It took a few attempts to get the picture to work as a map back ground and over lay with a map of the 40 vice-counties of Ireland. The map misses the very east side of Co. Down, but there was a limit to how many times I was going to keep trying to get the map perfect. Anyway all the dots that are on the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb) map are on my map. The photo of *Lathraea squamaria* (Toothwort) was kindly given by Zoë Devlin. By the time *Irish Botanical News* drops on your door mat Toothwort should be starting to appear. Why not contact your vice-county recorder for information on sites near you, and have a go at finding Toothwort and filling out a survey form! If you find Toothwort on a river bank it is worth walking the river to see where else it is to be found, as it can often be common along wooded river banks.

I would like to thank Olivier Martin & Tim Rich for help with this issue.

Paul R. Green, Irish Botanical News

Irish AGM, Castlewellan, Saturday 13th September

The 2014 AGM of BSBI's Committee for Ireland will take place on the morning of Saturday 13th September at Hillyard House, Castlewellan, Co. Down.

Castlewellan is strategically placed on the north edge of the Mourne, close to the resort of Newcastle. The castle and its extensive grounds now constitute a forest park operated by the Northern Ireland Forest Service. Among other things, they feature a walled garden with an arboretum of rare exotics and a recently constructed "peace maze". At nearby Dundrum, the National Trust's Murlough Dunes site is the longest established official nature reserve in Ireland. After the formal meeting, it is hoped to arrange a guided visit to one or both of these fine botanical resources.

A limited amount of accommodation is available at Hillyard House, but should be arranged directly with them (Tel. 00 44 (0)28 4377 1999; E-mail: info@hillyardhouse.co.uk; website: www.hillyardhouse.co.uk). Further details of the programme will be available later.

John Faulkner

Irish BSBI Members' Conference & Celebration of 50 years of BSBI in Ireland

28/29/30 March 2014, National Botanic Gardens, Dublin

This is really exciting news! For a few years now the BSBI Committee for Ireland (CFI) have been hoping to have a members' conference in Ireland, and in March 2014 it's going to happen! It will be a great opportunity for BSBI recorders and members to get together, and for those who are curious about the BSBI to come and see what we're up to.

Provisional outline of events:

MapMate workshop - Fri 28th March

This is not part of the conference proper, but an add-on to capitalise on the visit of MapMate experts for the conference. This will be a great opportunity for BSBI vice-county recorders in particular to learn about MapMate.

Irish BSBI Members' Conference, Day 1 - Sat 29th March

- **Talks** in the morning.
- **Workshops** in the afternoon.
- **Celebration of 50 years** of the BSBI in Ireland in the evening.

- Workshops will include identification help with some critical groups, with experts from both Ireland and Britain. There will be at least two workshops focussing on tricky aquatic groups. Other workshops will cover *Euphrasia* ID, and perhaps ferns. There will be a technology theme too, with MapMate and the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb) covered.

- Celebration of 50 years of the BSBI in Ireland: There will be a small exhibition and a few short talks, followed by food. We hope that this will be a nice, relaxed, but well-attended and enjoyable celebration.

Irish BSBI Members' Conference, Day 2 - Sun 30th March

Morning:

- Unveiling of the new 'Irish Project' - another very exciting development!
- Further workshops
- VCR reports & general discussion of issues important to BSBI & recorders in Ireland.

Afternoon:

Optional guided tour of the Botanic Gardens.

Cost of attendance is €30/£25 (largely to cover catering), and booking will be required. Booking forms for registration and payment will be available on our website: <http://www.bsbi.org.uk/ireland.html>

For further details, or to express an interest in attending, contact Maria Long, BSBI Irish Officer, **Email:** maria.long@bsbi.org **Tel:** 00353 87 2578763

Note that non-members may attend, and indeed will be very welcome, but joining BSBI will be required. This costs €30/£25 and can be done online at: <http://www.bsbi.org.uk/subscriptions.html>

BSBI Irish field programme, 2014

These are dates for your diary only, full details are to be found in the BSBI Yearbook 2014 and on the BSBI website.

Sunday 11 th May Kilgerrill & Crit Island, NE Galway (H17) Leader: Chris Peppiatt	Saturday 17 th May Clare Glen, Co. Armagh (H37) Leader: John Faulkner
Sunday 8 th June Blackrock River valley, Galty MTS, Co. Limerick (H8) Leaders: Sylvia Reynolds & Con Breen	Saturday 21 st June Loughbarra Wetland, Co. Laois (H14) Leaders: Mark McCorry & Fiona Magowan
Saturday 5 th & Sunday 6 th July Torr Head & Fair Head, Co. Antrim (H39) Leader: David McNeill	Saturday 26 th July Co. Westmeath (H23) Leader: Con Breen
Saturday 16 th & Sunday 17 th August Heathland and other habitats, SE Galway (H15) Leaders: Micheline Sheehy Skeffington et al.	Saturday 6 th September Mullaghmore, Co. Sligo (H28) Leaders: Don Cotton & Robert Northridge
Saturday 13 th September Irish AGM, Castlewellan, See page 5 in IBN (not Yearbook)	Saturday 15th November Edenvale, Castlebridge, Co. Wexford (H12) Leader: Paul Green

Reaching out

Note from the BSBI Irish Officer, Maria Long

What a busy year it's been! And how it has flown! By the time you read this I will have been working as Irish Officer for almost a year and a half (at two days a week, that's equivalent to about 8 months).

I mentioned in my piece in IBN this time last year that I would be focusing on encouraging VCRs with individual recording strategies, digitizing data and submitting data. These are still some of my main aims and core duties. I have also focused a lot of my energy on raising the profile of the organisation. This activity, I hope, will lead to increased membership, but even more important than that, to increased recording and increased support for existing recorders. This is important because, when I ask recorders what they need most, the answer I receive time and time again is that they need help from others in their vice-county with their work as recorders.

Something that has struck me in recent months is the number of natural history organisations that are emerging across the country. Were you aware of the existence of the Longford/Westmeath Irish Wildlife Trust branch or the Inishowen Wildlife Club in Donegal? People seem to be taking to the wilds in a big way recently. And many of these groups are springing up in areas one might not have expected. Maybe the recession is helping people to re-connect with their immediate surroundings in some way? In any case, I feel that there has not been a better time for BSBI recorders to start reaching out more. Quite a few recorders have told me with great certainty that there are no botanists living in their county. This may be true in some cases, but I am starting to think that this would be unusual, rather than the norm. Maybe they just have not met them yet? Maybe they are not botanists *yet*... maybe they are keen naturalists, just waiting to be captivated by the world of recording wild plants!

The reason I am bringing this up now is that while I feel the time is ripe in terms of general interest in natural history, I think that VCRs will also have to go the extra mile themselves, so to speak, over the coming months and years to reach out in search of new recruits. The BSBI simply has to gain more members, and who is better placed to make links locally than the VCR themselves? Many live in their vice-counties, and if not, then usually have links there and/or regularly visit there.

Some ideas... How about checking the local papers or shops to see adverts for local natural history or even birding groups? These could be places to meet like-minded people, some of whom may be interested in recording wild

plants already, or may be open to learning more about it. Someone who makes a good birder, while not yet knowing their plants, may have many of the other skills needed to make a good plant recorder. Perhaps offering a trade would work?... “come along and help me record/digitise/get to my sites, and I will teach you some plants/give a talk to your group”.

I take every opportunity to promote the BSBI in Ireland, and have had some success – measured in terms of a heightened interest in the Society from young people. However, it is the local touch, like the examples I mentioned above, that I believe could be the key to the BSBI making the next big step. Would not it be great if we could go from being an organisation (in Ireland at least) which generally has one over-stretched botanical recorder per vice-county, to a situation where the VCR is at the steering wheel and there are a few people interested, helping and supporting? I realise that some of you are groaning right now, saying “That will never happen in my county”, but as I mentioned, there are natural history groups springing up all over the country. And by default, that means that there are people interested in natural history all over the country. We really have to make it our business to try to tap into these interested people, make some links and connections, and see if any of them like recording wild plants!

I should at this stage mention a couple of examples of ‘reaching out’ which are already up and running. Micheline Sheehy Skeffington took interested people, some of them students from NUI Galway, out last year a few times recording near Galway. The focus was on learning plants, but specifically with a view to recording. Micheline hopes to continue to build on this. Also, Stephen Ward (along with Sharon Parr) has recently set up a local group in Clare. They go out once a month, and are clear in their aims... they are not botanical guides, they are a group getting to grips with recording the plants of Co. Clare, and not just the Burren!

Something else worth considering is advertising your BSBI field meetings locally. This has worked well, for example, for John Faulkner in Armagh. John held a training field meeting early in 2013, advertised it with some local groups, and we had a great turnout, with a number of young people (some members, some not, but all keen!). John plans to build on this in future years.

And one final idea... if you or your vice-county is within an hour of a university or college which teaches ecology, botany, environmental science, etc., then you should really consider trying to link up with students. Final year students, or those doing masters courses, are often very keen to volunteer and help. Lecturers are often searching for projects – e.g. digitising datasets perhaps?

Again, if we do not reach out, how are we going to build the bridges that will keep BSBI alive and vibrant into the future? It would be great if all VCRs made a belated New Year's resolution to endeavour to have made links with at least one new, promising recruit during 2014. How many of you are up for the challenge?!

To finish up, I have had at least some contact with most of you during the year. (I have had lots and lots with some!) If you feel that I can help you in any way, and we are not already in regular communication, then please just get in touch... pick up the phone, write to me, email me... whatever you prefer.

Contact details:

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me with any queries or comments relating to the BSBI or plant recording in Ireland.

Address: Maria Long, BSBI Irish Officer, National Botanic Gardens,
Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

Email: maria.long@bsbi.org

Telephone: 00 353 (0)87 2578763

Web: <http://www.bsbi.org.uk/ireland.html>

Attention! 'Irish Species Project' on the way

John Faulkner, *Drumherriff Lodge, Orchard Road,
Lough Gall, Co. Armagh, BT61 8JD*

Even if you ignore the rest of IBN – which we hope you don't - you must read this piece! Until now, some BSBI projects have been planned with Great Britain more clearly in mind than Ireland. To redress the balance, we are now to have a new project specifically designed for Irish needs.

The aim will be to create up-to-date information on 8 species that may be in decline in Ireland. By the end of the project, we should have data on the present distribution and abundance of these species. We should also have a better idea of how much their range has contracted, and be able to evaluate better the historical information on them in the BSBI's Distribution Database (known as the DDb). As we will also encourage the simultaneous recording of all plants in the areas to be visited, the project will also generate records of value for the longer-term Atlas 2020 project.

The project will run in 2014 and 2015 and involve all vice-county

recorders (VCRs) and any others who would like to take part. We have selected 8 species that are believed to be in decline, and will be asking you to do two things. First, VCRs will be given a list of known former localities to be revisited and recorded. And secondly, we will ask you to make similar records for as many other sites for these species as you have the time and inclination to visit. Full details will be sent out to all VCRs when the recording forms and instructions are available. There will be flexibility to vary the choice of sites where the originals are lacking in traceable detail or are impractical in other ways.

The 8 selected species are:

Botrychium lunaria (Moonwort)
Carex pseudocyperus (Cyperus Sedge)
Gentianella campestris (Field Gentian)
Lathraea squamaria (Toothwort)
Parnassia palustris (Grass-of-Parnassus)
Primula veris (Cowslip)
Pyrola minor (Common Wintergreen)
Vaccinium oxycoccos (Cranberry)

As these are all distinctive and appealing species that grow in “good” habitats, recording them should be especially pleasurable and hassle-free! Taken together, they are also identifiable over a long period of the year. It will be for VCRs to coordinate the recording in their vice-county, but it is hoped that other botanists will also want to take part. Most VCRs will no doubt be thrilled to receive offers of help.

The Committee for Ireland has been working on the idea of an Irish project for some time. Now that we are close to launch (at the Irish BSBI Members’ Conference, 28/29/30 March, National Botanic Gardens), the Committee is more convinced than ever that the project could invigorate botanical recording in our 40 vice-counties under the newly-restructured BSBI.

Seize the opportunity!

For one year only

Michael O'Sullivan, *Knockavota, Milltown, Co. Kerry*

Some plants have a habit of appearing in a given season and then for some reason or no reason at all disappearing never to be seen at their favoured sites again with very few exceptions.

All the species I have recorded down the years that fit this category have one thing in common, they are very rare in this locality.

Silene latifolia (White Campion) – cornfield margin, Knockavota (V99.81), Milltown, Co. Kerry (**H2**), July 1983.

Carduus nutans (Musk Thistle) – grassland, Kilderry South (V99.80), Milltown, Co. Kerry (**H2**), July 1983.

Humulus lupulus (Hop) – disused limestone quarry, Steelroe (V79.97), Killorglin, Co. Kerry (**H2**), October 1984. (However this plant was seen again in August 1996).

Lathyrus japonicus (Sea Pea) – dunes, Rossbeigh (V66.94), Co. Kerry (**H1**), July 1989. (Recorded previous to this but not since).

Hydrocharis morsus-ranae (Frogbit) – lake edge, Caragh Lake (V72.90), Co. Kerry (**H1**), July 1989.

Senecio cineraria (Silver Ragwort) – shingle, Cromane (V70.99), Co. Kerry (**H2**), July 2009.

Antirrhinum majus (Snapdragon) – disused limestone quarry, Steelroe (V79.97), Killorglin, Co. Kerry (**H2**), August 2009.

As for the Sea Pea site and many more typical dune plants at Rossbeigh there is an increasing risk of permanent damage to the entire ecosystem as a result of erosion caused by the recent storms.

Crambe maritima (Sea-kale) found in S. Kerry (**H1**)

Hannah Mulcahy, *Gortnascreena, Whitegate, Co. Clare*

During the early summer of 2013 I had been on a BSBI field outing to some coastal sites in Connemara, Co. Galway, and there I was introduced to *Crambe maritima*, or Sea-kale (among other brilliant plants) with John Conaghan. Something niggled in the back of my mind that this plant was familiar to me, as

it is has pretty remarkable fleshy blue leaves. But I was told it is only found on the east and south coasts and one small, contained patch where we were on the west coast.

During the second last week of August 2013 I was staying with my Grandparents in Kilshannig (Q61) about a 15 minute drive from Castlegregory on the Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry. There is a regular walk that my family go on with our dogs near our house which follows a path around part of the Kilshannig point. On the 21st of August I went out looking for Sea-kale (see page 2), hoping my childhood memory would be trustworthy, and eventually I spotted the plant growing below a sandy cliff about 2m high facing NE on the margin between pebble and grassy parts of the small beach, away from the high tide mark. There were two plants growing quite near each other, and although I did look along the rest of the beach (and they are very easy to spot) I could only find those two. I only had a camera with me so that was the only thing I recorded there.

Unfortunately, I did not have time to search the wider areas on other days. I sent all the information I had to VC recorder Caroline Mhic Daeid, which was not much, admittedly, but I included a rough GPS location so that she could find it later that summer to make a recording. Caroline informed me that this was a renewed record for *C. maritima* for **H1** since the early 1900s, where it had been recorded in Spa in 1905, but it was gone in 1914. The nearest recent record in Co. Kerry has been from **H2**, on the other side of the Dingle Peninsula near Cromane (which lies on the border of **H1** and **H2**).

Last December (2013) I visited the site again and unfortunately large chunks of the sandy cliffs had fallen down on to the pebble beach below, probably due to the series of storms during this month. I hope to check if it is still there again next summer, with more recruits and no habitat loss.

***Centaureum pulchellum* (Lesser Centaury) re-found at the Back Strand, Co. Waterford (H6)**

Paul R. Green, Yoletown, Ballycullane, New Ross, Co. Wexford

During the summer of 2013, I was asked to survey an area bordering the Back Strand at Kilmacleague West (S628.015). One of the few areas of the Back Strand I had not visited before. The area was heavily grazed by cattle. The largest drain which is brackish water was full of *Ruppia maritima* (Beaked Tasselweed). The margin of the drain had bare soil for much of its length; here

I counted over 400 plants of *Centaurium pulchellum*. On the opposite bank of the drain, the adjoining field has several bare areas which are wintered flooded; here I counted 136 plants of *C. pulchellum*. Other species found along the bank of the drain included: *Carex distans* (Distant Sedge), *Eleocharis uniglumis* (Slender Spike-rush), *Juncus ranarius* (Frog Rush) and *Parapholis strigosa* (Hard-grass). *Trifolium fragiferum* (Strawberry Clover) was abundant along the bank of the drain and frequent over several of the neighbouring fields.

The only previous record for *C. pulchellum* from the Back Strand was made 114 years earlier by R.L. Praeger on 12 August 1899 from the Tramore end of the Back Strand.

Lewis W. Dillwyn
***Carex divisa* at the Cunnigar, Co. Waterford (H6)**

Paul R. Green, *Yoletown, Ballycullane, New Ross, Co. Wexford*

"in 1809, a Welshman, Lewis W. Dillwyn and botanist and a naturalist visited Dungarvan. In his diary, he described his visit to the Cunnigar – 'Monday July 10th I rose this morning at six and I employed myself till breakfast in laying out my plants etc. Soon after ten we took a boat and crossed the river to an island called Connygare on which *Gladiolus Communis* in Gough's Camden is said to grow but tho' we hunted over every part of the island we saw nothing like *Gladiolus* not any other plant which can be considered at all rare except *Juncus Acutus*, *Viola Lutea* and one specimen which Woods gathered of *Carex Divisa*'....

The above note was given to Declan McGrath. I have done much research but have not been able to find anything else about Dillwyn's visit to Dungarvan or where the article came from.

Carex divisa (Divided Sedge) is a very rare sedge in Ireland having only been reported from Cos Dublin, Kilkenny and Wexford. This is a new species to the list of plants for Co. Waterford. The habitat is certainly suitable for it to grow at the Cunnigar.

This is the earliest dated record for *Gladiolus communis* (Eastern *Gladiolus*) from Ireland. Reynolds (2002) gives the first Irish record as 1994 from Rock Island, West Cork (**H3**).

Juncus acutus (Sharp Rush) is still to be found in large numbers on the Cunnigar.

Viola lutea (Mountain Pansy) is likely to refer to *Viola tricolor* subsp. *curtisii*, but neither species are recorded from the dunes here.

If you are visiting the Cunnigar do keep an eye out for the *Carex divisa*.

Reference:

Reynolds, S.C.P. (2002) *A catalogue of alien plants in Ireland*. National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

White forms of flowers

Jackie O'Connell, *Parochial House, Caragh, Naas, Co. Kildare*

Some years ago while hillwalking in Wicklow I came across a small patch of white Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*). One of the group said it was a sign of good fortune. Whether it was a desire for more good fortune or simple curiosity I then began to keep a watchful eye for white forms of other wild flowers. There soon followed sightings and photographs of Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) and St. Dabeoc's Heath (*Daboecia cantabrica*) in Connemara. The Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) seemed happy to produce white forms more often than other flowers. A steep slope on the new Carlow bypass produces several clumps of the white Foxglove only-no purple ones at all. While nurseries can easily provide various colour forms of most flowers I began to form the opinion or theory that nature herself can surprise us with white forms of most red/pink, blue or purple flowers. Of course the Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*) - my personal indicator of spring, is practically 50/50 white or blue, so I leave it out of the equation. The woodland bluebell does not disappoint in showing off a solitary white flower from time to time in a haze of dense blue. In recent years country walks and slow driving have been rewarded with sightings of white flowers of Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Greater Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), and a beautiful pure white plant of the Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*). After collecting its seed this violet is now very happy in my wild garden. A trip to the Burren in 1997 was rewarded with photographs of a white form of the Large-flowered Butterwort (*Pinguicula grandiflora*). With each new sighting of white forms I was becoming more comfortable with my initial theory. In the Burren the Early-purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*) bursts out in a wonderful range of colours including many pure white forms. The Green-winged Orchid (*Anacamptis morio*) also produces the occasional white form, and the pale variety of the Bee orchid (*Ophrys apifera* var. *chlorantha*) is a delightful find. I still am waiting to photograph a white Pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*); and what of

the white form of the Common Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii* subsp. *o'kellyi*)! If Patrick B. O'Kelly could make a name for himself by popularising his white discovery what future lay in store for me with my growing catalogue of white forms!

Each time I found a white form of the common flowers I noticed that the entire plant was different-the stem and leaves were of a lighter, more delicate shade of green, making the whole plant stand out and not just its flowers.

There are beautiful displays of the Rosebay Willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*) on the country roads and bog margins here in north Kildare. Having previously photographed white forms of the Greater Willowherb I wondered was there a white form of the more photogenic Rosebay anywhere. That, I felt would put Q E D to my theory, but I had never heard of anyone finding one. Patience, they say, is always rewarded. Returning home on a country road, I was stopped in my tracks by a beautiful display of pure white Rosebay Willowherb (see front cover & page 2). Being such a stately flower it was more beautiful than I could have imagined, and again its stems and leaves of a lighter colour. Out came the camera. The experts say that these white forms are lacking the red/blue pigments that give the colours to the other flowers but would deny that they have a beauty all their own. An rud is annamh is iontach.

What other white forms I might find I do not know, but having started from curiosity and progressing to theory (proven in my mind anyway), good fortune and much joy have indeed come my way with so many sightings and photographs of white forms of so many wild flowers.

By the way, if anyone finds a white form of the Purple loose-strife (*Lythrum salicaria*) let me know!

***Epipactis helleborine* (Broad-leaved Helleborine)
in the centre of Ireland's capital city**

Richard McMullen, 75 Silchester Park, Glenageary, Co. Dublin

In 2009 I found several spikes of *Epipactis helleborine* (see page 32) in two grids protecting Birch trees in the parking area directly behind the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin Castle. They looked very happy growing vigorously from leaf litter which had been trapped in the grid. I happened to pass that way on 12th February 2013 and there were several shrivelled remains of orchid inflorescences presumably the same species. There cannot be too many capital cities sporting *E. helleborine* at their very cores. (They could hardly have been planted, could they?)

A report on the Flora of Cork (H3-H5), 2013

Tony O'Mahony, 6 Glenthorn Way, Dublin Hill, Cork City

Introduction

2013 certainly proved a year of mixed personal fortunes. A prolonged bout of late-onset asthma (a chronic medical condition previously unknown to me) extended from January to June, and virtually brought fieldwork to a standstill during this time. Thankfully, however, botanical correspondence continued as normal, and I express my thanks to Graham Day & Julia Nunn, John Diggin, Jim O'Donnell, Paul O'Donoghue and Pat Smiddy, for contacting me regarding their discoveries, which are included in this Report.

On the positive side, the enforced confinement presented me with an opportunity to update distributional data on the PC for numerous Cork plant taxa. I also availed of this time to peruse through a wide range of specialist botanical literature, and thereby refresh my memory on the diagnostic characters of species and hybrids within the families Apiaceae, Poaceae, Cyperaceae and Rosaceae, in addition to genera such as: *Atriplex*, *Eleocharis*, *Equisetum*, *Fumaria*, *Fragaria* and *Viola*, etc.

The major Cork botanical event of the year, was the publication, by Sherkin Island Marine Station (Director, Matt Murphy), of the beautiful book: *The Wild Plants of Bere, Dursley, Whiddy and other Islands in Bantry Bay* (Akeroyd 2013). This important work effectively marks the culmination of some thirty-seven years of botanical recording of the islands of SW Cork (spanning the period, 1975-2011), which has highlighted this region (i.e. the islands and the surrounding mainland) as a refuge for numerous plant species (native and naturalised) that are nationally rare on the island of Ireland. The remarkable botanical finds of the various survey-teams (mainly British botanists, based at the Marine Station on Sherkin Island for various lengths of time in any given year), are summed up in this current work, and in the two previous, related publications, namely: *The Wild Plants of Sherkin, Cape Clear and adjacent Islands of West Cork* (Akeroyd 1996), and its SUPPLEMENT (Akeroyd et al. 2011).

The results of these long-haul botanical surveys have surpassed all expectations, and highlighted the island-flora of SW Cork as of exceptional importance in an Irish Natural History context. The importance of these discoveries cannot be overstated, for no other region of Ireland or Britain harbours the following suite of botanical rarities (listed in alphabetical order; an asterisk* denoting naturalised species): **Allium ampeloprasum* var. *babingtonii*

(Wild Leek), **Althaea officinalis* (Marsh Mallow), **Artemisia absinthium* (Wormwood), *Asplenium obovatum* (Lanceolate Spleenwort), *Asplenium onopteris* (Irish Spleenwort), *Carex punctata* (Dotted Sedge), *Cerastium arvense* (Field Mouse-ear), *Chamaemelum nobile* (Chamomile), *Cicendia filiformis* (Yellow Centaury), *Crambe maritima* (Sea-kale), *Dianthus armeria* (Deptford Pink), *Euphorbia hyberna* (Irish Spurge), *Fumaria purpurea* (Purple Ramping-fumitory), *Geranium purpureum* (Little-Robin), **Kickxia elatine* (Sharp-leaved Fluellen), *Lathyrus japonicus* (Sea-pea), *Lotus subbiflorus* (Hairy Bird's-foot Trefoil), *Malva arborea* (Tree-mallow), **Misopates orontium* (Weasel's-snout), *Ornithopus perpusillus* (Bird's-foot), *Pinguicula grandiflora* (Large-flowered Butterwort), *Radiola linoides* (Allseed), **Rumex pulcher* (Fiddle Dock), *Saxifraga spathularis* (St Patrick's Cabbage), *Betonica officinalis* (Betony), *Stellaria neglecta* (Greater Chickweed), *Trifolium ornithopodioides* (Bird's-foot Clover), *Tuberaria guttata* (Spotted Rock-rose), **Valerianella dentata* (Narrow-fruited Cornsalad), **Verbascum virgatum* (Twiggy Mullein), and *Viola lactea* (Pale Dog-violet), etc.

On a personal note, fieldwork attained its customary momentum in the second half of 2013, and resulted in the reinstatement of the beautiful grass-adventive, *Polypogon monspeliensis* (Annual Beard-grass) to the Cork flora. Moreover, the interspecific hybrid, *Myosotis laxa* (Tufted Forget-me-not) x *M. scorpioides* (Water Forget-me-not) (= *M. x suzae*) was added to the East Cork (H5) flora, this polymorphic hybrid now being recorded from all three Cork vice-counties (H3-H5), though apparently not known elsewhere in Ireland at the present time. Particularly satisfying (and most unexpected), was the spontaneous occurrence in my garden, of a single, F1 plant of the interspecific hybrid, *Geranium purpureum* (Little-Robin) x *G. robertianum* (Herb-Robert), whose parents have cohabited in the garden for many years.

On 10 May, a roadside-embankment population of naturalised *Fragaria ananassa* (Garden Strawberry) was found on the northern arm of Arderrow T-junction (H5, W69.74), close to Ballyvolane Crossroads, Cork City. This clonal population occupied some 25m of embankment, suggesting that it has been established here for decades. Yet, on later visits to this site, it became clear that the Garden Strawberry had produced very few flowering stems, while no fully-developed fruits were in evidence. (Note: This peculiar phenomenon is common to virtually all of the Co. Cork populations of *Fragaria ananassa* that I have recorded since the 1970s, these populations being very shy-flowering, and their receptacles only partially expanding, the incipient 'fruits' thus malformed and whitish to blotchy-red in colour! Yet all of these naturalised populations bore perfectly-formed pollen (as would be expected in this fertile octoploid species),

suggesting that the flowers of these wild clones are highly (but not totally) self-incompatible. So this begs the question: ‘Who, in their right mind, would grow commercial strawberry plants that are shy-flowering and fail to fruit?’ I would be delighted to hear from any botanists’ who can provide a plausible answer to the above conundrum.)

An email from Paul O’Donoghue on 29 May, confirmed the ongoing presence of a small population of *Crambe maritima* (Sea-kale) at Kinure (H4, W69.49), close to the mouth of Oyster Haven Inlet (east of Kinsale town), where he had found it in recent years.

On 30 May, I rechecked the single clump of the partially pollen-/fruit-fertile interspecific hybrid, *Carex divulsa* (Grey Sedge) x *C. muricata* (Prickly Sedge), that I originally found on Kilnap amenity walkway (H5, W66.75), Cork City, on 26 May 2010. The hybrid was still present here, in association with plenty of *Carex divulsa*, but no plants of *C. muricata* were seen on this visit. Other species of interest on the walkway, include *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard’s Downy-rose), *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose) and long-established *Viola odorata* (Sweet Violet) populations.

Contact from John Diggin in early-June, established that he had found a population of *Poterium sanguisorba* subsp. *sanguisorba* (Salad Burnet) in Ballyhemican limestone quarry (H4, W74.64), near Raffeen village, on the western side of Cork Harbour – the first Mid Cork site for this species since the 1870s! John also reported a large population of *Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid) here, a species also recorded by John O’Sullivan.

In mid-June, Jim O’Donnell reported his discovery of scattered populations of the nationally rare *Tuberaria guttata* (Spotted Rockrose) on coastal cliff outcrops to the southwest of Lough Hyne, in the Ballinard area (H3, W08.26). This is a marvellous find, and gives hope that many other stations for this gem of a species will be discovered in this general area in the years ahead.

On 29 June, a visit to Buck Leary’s Crossroads (H5, W71.79) to the NE of Cork City, refound a road-margin population of naturalised *Geranium x oxonianum* (Druce’s Crane’s-bill) on the southern arm of this crossroads (H5, W72.78), where I had noted it a few years’ previously.

While gardening on 18 July, I was astonished to fortuitously observe a single plant of the interspecific hybrid, *Geranium purpureum* (Little-Robin) x *G. robertianum* (Herb-Robert) growing amidst an abundance of both its parents, which have cohabited here for many years. This spontaneous F1 hybrid bore tiny (8-10mm diameter) *G. robertianum*-like flowers, though the well-formed, yellow anthers were inherited from its *G. purpureum* parent. Under the microscope, the spherical pollen grains of this hybrid appeared normal and

potentially viable, yet the majority of flowers failed to bear fruit, though occasional calyces bore a full complement of small, *G. robertianum*-like mericarps, displaying the typical fruit-coat ornamentation of that species. In all of these characters, this garden hybrid resembled the wild populations of the hybrid that I have recorded in Mid Cork (**H4**), East Cork (**H5**), and Waterford (**H6**) during the time period 1988-2012.

On 22 July, my wife Marie and I undertook a survey of naturalised *Calystegia pulchra* (Hairy Bindweed) populations in the Dripsey-Coachford region of Mid Cork (**H4**, W4.7. & W5.7.), which is the main Co. Cork base for this beautiful species, where it has been established for decades. As luck would have it, most of these populations were in flower on this day, though long-term observations have emphatically demonstrated that this species is generally a fickle and erratic flowerer in most of these sites.

On 25 July, fieldwork was undertaken in the Shanballymore-Meadstown area of East Cork (**H5**, R6.0. & R7.0.). A roadside hedge adjacent to Bealaboga T-junction (**H5**, R73.07), close to the River Funshion, produced a small population of the interspecific rose hybrid, *R. sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *Rosa* x *suberecta*). I originally found this population in 1996. Grassy roadside margins here, held small, cohabiting populations of *Hypericum perforatum* (Perforate St John's-wort) and *H. maculatum* (Imperforate St John's-wort). A subsequent search of a roadside hedgebank a short distance south of Meadstown T-junction (**H5**, R71.09) produced small populations of *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose), *Rosa* x *suberecta* (Hybrid Downy-rose) and *Silene vulgaris* (Bladder Campion). Within County Cork, the very distinctive Bladder Campion is still of locally frequent occurrence in coastal areas; yet, for whatever reason, its inland populations are now extremely localised, and generally consist of just a few plants.

On this outing, a final stop was made at Templemary T-junction and adjacent Pond (**H5**, R69.07) – a beautifully scenic habitat that provides a refreshing, heart-warming change to the ubiquitous, mundane, biodiversity-barren modern-day pasture fields of Co. Cork. Ditch-habitats bordering the roadside here, produced beautiful flowering, floating mats of *Persicaria amphibia* (Amphibious Bistort) and occasional clumps of *Carex otrubae* (False Fox-sedge), this sedge of commonplace occurrence in Co. Cork coastal sites, but distinctly local inland, where it is predominantly confined to calcareous paludal habitats. A nice surprise was an abundance of *Myosotis* x *suzae* (Hybrid Water Forget-me-not), an addition to the flora of East Cork (**H5**). Even more interesting, these plants were F2 segregants, not F1 hybrids, and further, detailed work is needed on-site, to establish if one or both of its parents (i.e. *M. laxa*

(Tufted Forget-me-not) and *M. scorpioides*) Water Forget-me-not), are also present here. Subsequent microscopic examination of this hybrid, showed most pollen grains to be malformed and sterile, yet many calyces bore at least one fully-developed nutlet. Although I added *Myosotis x suzae* to the Irish Flora in 1996, and it is now recorded from sites in all three Cork vice-counties (**H3-H5**), I am unaware of any other Irish records for it to-date. (Note: This situation, which has many parallels in the Irish Flora, once again highlights the disinterest among Irish botanists in the study and recording of interspecific hybrids – as exemplified by the omission of numerous plant hybrids in the 8th edition of the work: *Webb's An Irish Flora* (Parnell & Curtis 2012)). Hedgebanks in the area produced scattered bushes of *Rosa micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweetbriar), *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose) and the interspecific hybrid, *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweetbriar) (= *R. x suberecta*).

On 29 July, a botanical outing was made to a limestone working-quarry (**H5**, W84.72) in Cork Harbour, near to Carrigtohill village. In July 2007, while undertaking work for Cork City Council, I visited this quarry on business, and was delighted to find the beautiful alien adventive grass species, *Polypogon monspeliensis* (Annual Beard-grass) occurring in a few sites here. The present visit showed this species to still occur here (as small, scattered populations), on a water-retaining substrate. A few clumps were collected for cultivation at home, and these flowered into November 2013, and were still in fresh vegetative condition in late-January 2014. Two, previous, Cork Harbour records for this species are attributable to R. A. Phillips, namely: Saleen Strand [**H5**, c.W87.67], 1893; and Corkbeg Strand [**H5**, c.W82.63], 1897. (Note: As the precise location of each of Phillips' finds is unknown, only an approximate grid reference for these can be given.) Paul Green informed me that in 2013 he found *P. monspeliensis* as a weed in Ashbrook Garden Centre (Co. Meath, **H22**, O03.56) and as a weed in a garden at the junction of Adelaide Street and Haddington Terrace, Dun Laoghaire (Co. Dublin, **H21**, O24.28). As far as I can ascertain, these recent records are the only modern-day Irish records for *P. monspeliensis*, all previous finds dating back to c.1900.

This greatly-disturbed quarry habitat produced some other nice finds, the best being many, fruiting plants of naturalised *Verbascum virgatum* (Twiggy Mullein), which I had last recorded in East Cork (**H5**) in 1973. Populations of the very colourful *Oenothera glazioviana* (Large-flowered Evening-primrose) were also present in one area of the quarry – only its second known Cork Harbour site, this species being long-established in a sand-quarry at Millaun (**H5**, W81.71), a short distance west of the current site. The native *Blackstonia*

perfoliata (Yellow-wort) was present in abundance, this population being the largest ever recorded for this species in County Cork. Naturalised *Epilobium brunnescens* (New Zealand Willowherb) was locally abundant on-site. The only dispiriting aspect, was the presence of two, rampant, naturalised species – *Clematis vitalba* (Traveller’s-joy) and *Chamerion angustifolium* (Rosebay Willowherb) – both pestilential species, that threaten to dominate and degrade this massive limestone quarry site in the years’ ahead, in the way that they have despoiled and devalued so many other Cork (and Irish) botanical habitats in the past. (Note: *Clematis vitalba* is long-established on the central-strip of the Dunkettle dual carriageway, on the eastern fringe of Cork City, while it is also rampant on the margins of the adjoining Cork-Midleton railway line. Moreover, it continues to invade urban habitats, to the detriment of the native flora.)

On 4 August, three bushes of *Rosa rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) were found in a hedgebank bordering the Glenville-Rathcormack Road (R614), a few hundred metres east of Pound Crossroads (H5, W74.89). This is now the third recorded site for Sweet-briar in this general area – a rare and very localised rose species in southern Ireland.

In mid-August, Graham Day sent me completed recording cards for botanical work undertaken in southwest Cork in July, while on holiday in this beautiful area with Julia Nunn. Of particular interest, is Graham’s independent discovery on Whiddy Island (H3, V9.4.) of the nationally rare *Asplenium onopteris* (Irish Spleenwort), which had also been reported from Whiddy by Akeroyd (2013) – the only island record for SW Cork to-date. On long island (H3, V9.2) Graham updated records for *Inula helenium* (Elecampane), *Glaucium flavum* (Yellow Horned-poppy), *Geranium purpureum* (Little-Robin) and *Sagina nodosa* (Knotted Pearlwort), while also reporting the presence of *Festuca filiformis* (Fine-leaved Sheep’s-fescue) here, a grass species not previously recorded in SW Cork, but that may yet prove of widespread occurrence in this region of Co. Cork. New finds, included: *Erysimum cheiri* (Wallflower) on Cape Clear; *Juncus ranarius* (Frog Rush) at Tralispeen, Tragumna Bay (H3, W11.28), shortly west of Lough Hyne; and *Mentha spicata* (Spearmint) on Heir Island (H3, V9.2. or W0.2.). However, two further reported finds on Heir Island (i.e. *Mentha suaveolens* (Round-leaved Mint) and *Euphrasia micrantha* (Slender Eyebright)) hint at taxonomic problems for botanists recording in this region and elsewhere. For example, only *Mentha x villosa* (Apple-mint) and *Euphrasia scottica* (Scottish Eyebright) have previously been reported from Heir Island (both are of widespread occurrence in the islands (Akeroyd 1996)), though *Mentha suaveolens* has recently been found on Whiddy, and *Euphrasia micrantha* on Beara and Dursay (Akeroyd

2013). (Note: These two, related *Mentha* taxa are best distinguished on the basis of fertility criteria, as functionally-male plants of *M. suaveolens* display violet-mauve anthers bearing an abundance of perfect pollen, whereas *M. x villosa* always has whitish-brown, aborted anthers, that are devoid of pollen. With regard to *Euphrasia scottica* and *E. micrantha*, both of these taxa are frequently confounded, and Stace (2011) comments that they may not be taxonomically distinct.)

On 21 August, a brief examination of the Tivoli Docks Industrial Estate (H5, W70.72 & W71.72), Cork City, turned up populations of *Veronica polita* (Grey Field-speedwell) in the Millennium Park, while the railed-in ground on the U-bend facing the park, yielded *Chaenorhinum minus* (Small Toadflax), this being only its fourth recorded Cork City site in recent years. Most regrettably, ‘tidying up’ and over zealous herbicide spraying on-site over the past few years, has drastically reduced floral diversity here – to the benefit of no-one, it would seem, for all of the effort and cost expended in the process. Yet, waste ground still harbours small populations of naturalised *Melilotus albus* (White Melilot) and *Melilotus altissimus* (Tall Melilot), these being the survivors of once massive, delightfully colourful colonies, that flourished here in the 1970s.

On 23 August, I rechecked a number of Cork City naturalised populations of the little annual, *Geranium pusillum* (Small-flowered Crane’s-bill): 1. (H5, W68.74), on a green in ‘Glenthorn’ housing estate, Dublin Hill; 2). (H5, W70.73), bordering the Old Youghal Road, fronting ‘Glenamoy Lawn’ housing estate, Mayfield; 3). (H5, W70.72), on the margin of the green of ‘Woodlands’ housing estate, Middle Glanmire Road, Mayfield. It was encouraging to note that many seedlings of *G. pusillum* were evident in bare patches of bone-dry green, which had recently been cut tightly.

A stop at Dunmanway town pond (H3, W23.52) on 25 August, allowed a very brief recheck of finds made here in 1999. *Geranium x oxonianum* (Druce’s Crane’s-bill) was still naturalised in the laneway hedgebank, adjacent to the pond; this hedgebank also holding a few bushes of *Rosa micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar) and *R. tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose). Disappointingly, the two, rose interspecific hybrids, *Rosa canina* (Dog-rose) x *R. tomentosa* (= *Rosa x scabriuscula*) and *R. micrantha* x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *Rosa x bigeneris*), were not refound on this occasion, prompting the need for a return visit in 2014.

On 20 September, accompanied by John Akeroyd, an afternoon of coastal botanising was undertaken in the Kinsale area. Parking near Charles Fort (H4, W66.49), the coastal path was followed southeast to Lower Cove (H4, W65.48). Scattered plants of the beautiful, naturalised umbellifer, *Foeniculum*

vulgare (Fennel), were found at the beginning of the walk, and it seems not improbable that these plants were derived from seed windblown from the battlements of nearby Charles Fort, where this herb has been established for centuries. Fine stands of *Eupatorium cannabinum* (Hemp-agrimony) were favoured by butterflies, while a large, rampant clone of naturalised *Calystegia silvatica* (Large Bindweed) sprawled over Bramble thickets (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.). Occasional runnels of water emerging from heathy ground, provided a microhabitat for the diminutive, and delightful, *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel), and also supported a small clonal stand of *Equisetum x litorale* (Shore Horsetail). Populations of fruiting *Atriplex glabriuscula* (Babington's Orache) occurred on the shoreline, and a nearby house had a hedging of the distinctive *Muehlenbeckia complexa* (Wireplant).

Our next stop was at White Strand (**H3**, W60.43), near the Old Head of Kinsale. Sadly, much of the former vegetation fringing the beach, has been badly eroded by storms over the years, the dominant suite of plant species including the halophyte, *Beta vulgaris* subsp. *maritima* (Sea Beet), associated with *Convolvulus arvensis* (Field Bindweed), *Carex arenaria* (Sand Sedge), *Ononis repens* (Restharrow), and the coastal grass hybrid, *Elytrigia atherica* (Sea Couch) x *Elytrigia juncea* (Sand Couch). The sandy embankments on the landward side of the coastal road are faring somewhat better and, in addition to the plant species just mentioned, they also support stands of *Eryngium maritimum* (Sea-holly) and a rhizomatous colony of naturalised *Rosa rugosa* (Japanese Rose). The rarer, glabrous-pedicelled variety of *Sonchus arvensis* (Perennial Sow-thistle) cohabited here with the normal, glandular-pedicelled form. A final stop was made at the sandy beach of Jarley's Cove (**H3**, W64.49), close to the mouth of the tidal River Bandon, at Kinsale. This was to show John Akeroyd the clonal population of the medicinal herb, *Lepidium latifolium* (Dittander), in its only extant West Cork (**H3**) site, where it has been established since at least the 1870s. Worryingly, a rampant stand of *Fallopia baldschuanica* (Russian-vine) is now naturalised close to the Dittander colony.

On 9 October, correspondence from Pat Smiddy, outlined his discovery of the beautiful coastal grass, *Leymus arenarius* (Lyme-grass) at Howe's Strand (**H3**, W55.43) in Courtmacsherry Bay, to the west of Garrettstown Strand. This highly disjunct population is a most unexpected find, and an addition to the flora of West Cork (**H3**). Lyme-grass was added to the Cork flora in 1981, from Ballycotton Bay, East Cork (**H5**, W9.6.) (T. O'Mahony 1986; *Ir. Nat. J.* 22 (1): 40-43); and has recently been found in the adjacent Youghal Bay (**H5**, X0.7.) (T. O'Mahony 2012; *Ir. Bot. News* 22: 16-26). Intriguingly, Lyme-grass was reported from Ballycotton Strand (**H5**, W9.6 and/or X0.6) by James Drummond

in the nineteenth century (J. Drummond 1818; *The Munster Farmer's Magazine* 6:67), while Mackay (1836) *also* accredited Drummond with a West Cork (**H3**) site for this currently very localised Irish coastal grass species, namely: "Sandbank at the western extremity of Bere" [i.e. the Beara Peninsula: **H3**, V50.40].

On 14 October, fieldwork was undertaken on the stretch of the River Lee Reservoir between Inniscarra Hydroelectric Dam (**H4**, W54.72) and Roove's Bridge (**H4**, W45.71), Coachford. My first stop was at the amenity boating site (**H4**, W52.72) on the Inniscarra-Dripsey Road (R618), some 2.5 km west of the dam. The tropical American adventive, *Cyperus eragrostis* (Pale Galingale) is now established here, having spread downriver from its Magooly (Lower Dripsey) site (**H4**, W51.73), where I first recorded it in 2001. This species now occupies three 1-km squares on the left bank of the River Lee Reservoir (viz. **H4**, W52.72; W51.72; & W51.73), and one wonders what time-period it will take for it to spread downriver of the Inniscarra dam, to the lower reaches of the River Lee? Pale Galingale is accompanied at the amenity boating site by the nationally rare annual, *Limosella aquatica* (Mudwort), which I first recorded here in October 2001, growing with *Elatine hexandra* (Six-stamened Waterwort), both species being new to hectad W57, and thus exhibiting an extension of their ranges on the River Lee Reservoir. (*Elatine hexandra* was not seen during the present survey.) The arable weed, *Solanum nigrum* (Black Nightshade) is also established along the gravel-and-boulder left bank of the Lee Reservoir, from Magooly downriver to the amenity boating site. At the Magooly site (**H4**, W51.73) *Kickxia elatine* (Sharp-leaved Fluellen) still seems confined to the short stretch of gravelly habitat where I originally found it in October 1985. It is accompanied by *Lepidium heterophyllum* (Smith's Pepperwort), *Potentilla anglica* (Trailing Tormentil), *Cyperus eragrostis* (Pale Galingale) and the annual *Veronica crista-galli* (Crested Field-speedwell), the seed of this latter very distinctive speedwell, having filtered into this shoreline habitat from its long-established populations bordering the nearby Inniscarra-Dripsey Road (R618). A final stop at Roove's Bridge (**H4**, W45.71) on the River Lee Reservoir near Coachford, allowed easy access to the right bank of the reservoir. The annual species, *Limosella aquatica* (Mudwort), *Spergularia rubra* (Sand Spurrey), *Persicaria minor* (Small Water-pepper) and diminutive-statured *Chenopodium rubrum* (Red Goosefoot) still occurred here in abundance, though (disappointingly), *Elatine hexandra* (Six-stamened Waterwort) was not seen on this visit. Of perennial species, the exquisitely-scented *Chamaemelum nobile* (Chamomile) commonly fringed the upper margin of the shoreline – here in its main Mid Cork (**H4**) site, where it has been known since 1975, while *Littorella*

uniflora (Shoreweed) formed dense, vegetative, half-submerged carpets, at the margin of the Reservoir.

On 17 October, further survey work was undertaken on a Mid Cork section of the River Lee Reservoir. The area examined, was the subcircular basin immediately downriver of Carrigadrohid Bridge (**H4**, W41.72. & W42.72), the left bank of which was accessed from the Coachford-Macroon Road (R618). Although this basin is shown on the map (OS Discovery Series, Sheet 80; 2006) as open water, this is far from the case, the habitat having changed radically since the 1980s, when it effectively was paludal. In the interim period, the substrate has consolidated in sections, these firm habitats supporting dense, expansive stands of *Phalaris arundinacea* (Reed Canary-grass) and *Salix cinerea* subsp. *oleifolia* (Rusty Willow) scrubwood, this latter with a very depauperate ground-flora. Gone, now, are the former, dense beds of intermingling annual species, such as *Apium inundatum* (Lesser Marshwort), *Persicaria minor* (Small Water-pepper) and *Lythrum portula* (Water-purslane) etc. though these are still present in damp spots as discrete populations.

The absence of *Elatine hexandra* (Six-stamened Waterwort) here (as on the other sections of the Reservoir surveyed on 14 October), suggests that this distinctive annual has retracted its range on the reservoir in recent years, yet far more intensive fieldwork would be needed (preferably earlier in the year), in order to establish if this impression is valid. In stark contrast to these negative observations, the bare-mud sites in the basin still support moderately dense colonies of *Limosella aquatica* (Mudwort) – a national rarity that occurs over virtually the entire length of the Reservoir (i.e. populations occurring from east of Toon Bridge (**H3**, W31.71) to the amenity boating site (**H4**, W52.72) near Inniscarra Dam, a distance of approximately 25 km.).

The presence of naturalised *Juncus tenuis* (Slender Rush)) in the Carrigadrohid basin, suggests that this species is gradually spreading downriver from its core base at the carpark-causeway (**H3**, W32.71) on the Macroon-Toon Bridge Road (R584), where it was found in the 1970s, by the late Maura Scannell. A most unexpected find here, was the beautiful rhizomatous grass species, *Glyceria maxima* (Reed Sweet-grass), which occurred as small, scattered populations in the narrow zone between the margins of the reedbeds and the muddy pans of the reservoir – suggesting that this species is a very recent arrival on-site. Like *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani* (Grey Club-rush), *Bolboschoenus maritimus* (Sea Club-rush) and *Eleocharis uniglumis* (Slender Spike-rush), Reed Sweet-grass may well have ‘winged’ its way to the reservoir, being seed-transported from distant coastal sites on the muddy feet / plumage of waterfowl. Yet the source of the founder colony presents a problem, as I am

unaware of any extant Co. Cork coastal sites for this species, and it is of very rare occurrence in inland Cork sites. Reed Sweet-grass is unknown in Co. Kerry (**H1-H2**), and rare in Co. Waterford (**H6**), where Paul Green (Green 2008) notes that it is increasingly planted around newly-dug ponds, and introduced into specially constructed wetlands, for water-purification purposes. Reed Sweet-grass can be a highly invasive species, and its progress in the River Lee Reservoir at Carrigadrohid, will be watched / monitored with interest in coming years.

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A report on fieldwork in Co. Limerick (**H8**), 2013

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Following publication of my *Flora of County Limerick* by the National Botanic Gardens in the spring, the main aims of fieldwork in 2013 were to botanize for the BSBI's proposed Atlas 2020 in hectads with low numbers of records since 2000, to replace records in hectads R11 and R31 (which only had two-figure grid references) with monad grid references, and to visit new places. The reality is that one does a lot of recording of the same common species over and over in

not very interesting habitats, but luckily there are rewards when one comes across a good new site, such as the volcanic hill or unimproved wet meadow mentioned in this report, or revisits a lovely habitat, such as the turlough area, or finds any of Limerick's rarer plants.

All fieldwork was done with my invaluable companion Julian Reynolds, but the tricky identifications were left to me! We started the season towards the SW of the county, doing systematic recording in mid-April in R32 and R33, and noting that pinkish-flowered *Anemone nemorosa* (Wood Anemone) was common along the Caher R. (14 April, R16.19, R17.19). The next trip from Dublin was to underworked R72 in SE Limerick, where *Luzula pilosa* (Hairy Wood-rush) was found on a low bank by a side-road N of Glenroe (29 April, R717.203), with *Lathyrus linifolius* (Bitter-vetch) and *Vaccinium myrtillus* (Bilberry), also *Alchemilla filicaulis* subsp. *vestita* (Hairy Lady's-mantle) on the top of a stone bridge just N of Griston Cross Roads (R74.23) and *Tanacetum vulgare* (Tansy) on a roadside N of Duntryleague (R78.28).

The first real treat of the year on 30 April was to find access up the volcanic hill Knockseefin near Pallas Grean (R75.45). The steep slopes, with Gorse thickets and some seepage areas, were tightly grazed and studded with numerous flowering *Ficaria verna* subsp. *fertilis* (Lesser Celandine). West-facing outcrop near the trig. point (R753.450) had *Vicia sativa* subsp. *nigra* in flower (the native subspecies of Common Vetch), with *Festuca ovina* (Sheep's-fescue), *Geranium molle* (Dove's-foot Crane's-bill), *Sedum anglicum* (English Stonecrop) and *Trifolium dubium* (Lesser Trefoil). This *Vicia* subspecies is otherwise only known currently by the Shannon Estuary near Foynes and on limestone near Lough Gur. More recording was done on the same day on roadsides near Wonderhill (R71.42), with *Prunus domestica* (Wild Plum) established in a hedgerow here as it is SW of Cromwell Hill (R72.37).

On 24 May we had a day in the mid-south of the county and came across several large flowering bushes of what is either *Crataegus laevigata* (Midland Hawthorn) or its hybrid with *C. monogyna* (Hawthorn) on a little side-road E of Feenagh (R442.271), where it must originally have been planted; the fruits need to be checked. *C. laevigata* is uncommon in Ireland, but the hybrid *C. x media* is quite common in the NE. *Myosotis discolor* (Changing Forget-me-not), its habitats varying from wet to dry, was seen on a nearby roadside (R44.27) and *Geum rivale* (Water Avens) was an unexpected find at the base of a Hawthorn hedge just W of Feenagh (R39.26), with *Angelica sylvestris* (Wild Angelica) and *Juncus inflexus* (Hard Rush).

The second good new site was a lovely, apparently unimproved, wet meadow SW of Rathkeale by the R. Deel across Palatine Bridge (29 May,

R35.39). Many plants of *Myosotis discolor* were growing among *Bromus hordeaceus* (Soft Brome) and wetter areas with shallow standing water contained *Carex disticha* (Brown Sedge), *Eleocharis palustris* (Common Spike-rush), *Juncus* cf. *acutiflorus* (Rush, immature), *Persicaria amphibia* (Amphibious Bistort) and stunted *Phalaris arundinacea* (Reed Canary-grass). In one such area there were also numerous plants of *Lysimachia nummularia* (Creeping-Jenny), known mainly around Limerick City and by the Shannon. Somewhat drier parts of the meadow had *Ranunculus bulbosus* (Bulbous Buttercup), a small plant of *Alchemilla filicaulis* subsp. *vestita* and many *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *pulchella* (Early Marsh-orchid), with the sides of the labellum clearly recurved. Later that day, two small patches of *Galium odoratum* (Woodruff) were seen on a shaded roadside N of Knockaderry (R34.35), and a greyish-green downy-leaved *Rosa* across the road.

In early July we recorded in several monads in R31 and R32. *Carex laevigata* (Smooth-stalked Sedge) was seen again on the damp roadside in the steep-sided valley S of Broadford (8 July, e.g. R342.191) and found at a new site beside the little stream which flows N from that valley, near a ruined church (9 July, R335.203). It was growing in marshy ground by the stream among *Juncus effusus* (Soft-rush), *J.* cf. *acutiflorus*, *Iris pseudacorus* (Yellow Iris) and *Senecio aquaticus* (Marsh Ragwort). There is also an attractive lane running N-S in the same monad (R33.20), at first shaded and bordered by woodland, then more open, with abundant *Rosa arvensis* (Field-rose) and a downy-leaved *Rosa* in one place.

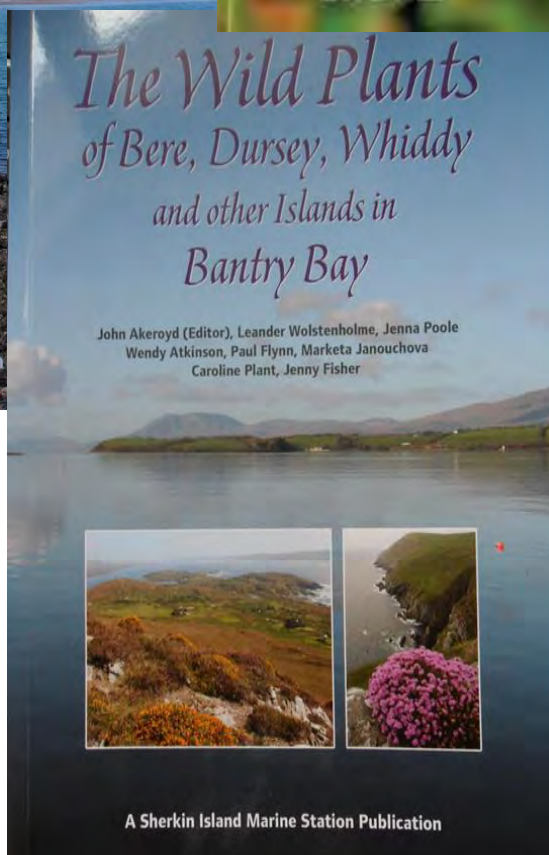
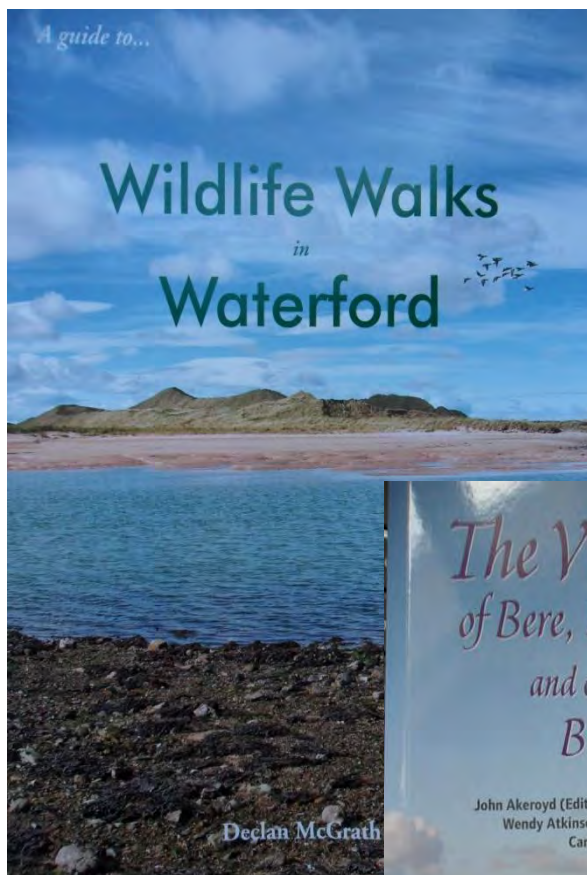
On the very hot afternoon of 8 July, Julian and I met up with Geoff Hunt from Newcastle West, an ornithologist and author of a book on Limerick walks. Geoff showed us a number of artificial lagoons near Raheenagh (all in R28.25). A large-flowered aquatic *Ranunculus* was out of reach in one lagoon and smaller-flowered *R. trichophyllus* (Thread-leaved Water-crowfoot) grew at the muddy edge of another lagoon, with *Potamogeton obtusifolius* (Blunt-leaved Pondweed). A third lagoon had a dense cover of non-native *Lemna minuta* (Least Duckweed).

On the way back to Dublin on 9 July, we stopped at Castleconnell Bog to look for *Rhynchospora fusca* (Brown Beak-sedge) and to check *Trichophorum* (Deergrasses). This bog seems to be the sole Limerick location for *R. fusca* (quite a rare plant in Ireland), a small patch last seen in 1998. The bog is much cut-over, degraded in places and is also now traversed by the new motorway. The track to the 1998 site was overgrown and access was only possible some distance away – perhaps serendipity as I almost immediately found two patches of many flowering plants of *R. fusca* in wet peat (R680.630)!

Associated species included *R. alba* (White Beak-sedge), *Andromeda polifolia* (Bog-rosemary), *Drosera rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Sundew), *Erica tetralix* (Cross-leaved Heath), *Narthecium ossifragum* (Bog Asphodel) and *Sphagnum*. Pools (with *Charophytes*) in the same area were full of *Utricularia minor* (Lesser Bladderwort), flowering profusely, perhaps due to the good summer. *Drosera anglica* (Great Sundew) was seen in one place, growing among *Sphagnum* (R679.630). As a juxtaposition to the native bog plants, there was a collection of garden discards at the bog edge (R68.63), including *Alchemilla mollis* (Soft Lady's-mantle), *Carex pendula* (Pendulous Sedge), *Lysimachia punctata* (Dotted Loosestrife) and *Solidago* sp. (Goldenrod).

On David Nash's BSBI meeting in N Tipperary (H10) on 29 June I found really convincing *Trichophorum cespitosum* s.s. (Northern Deergrass), growing with or near more common *T. germanicum* (Deergrass) on Firville Bog (e.g. M93.01, M94.01). The tufts of *T. cespitosum* s.s. were smaller and more open, some of the very narrow stems prostrate, with the uppermost leaf-sheath openings distinctly round. Shiny black nuts were observed on specimens brought home, so the plants were fertile. I was then interested to look for such plants on bogs in Limerick. On 9 July there were many tussocky plants of characteristic dense erect *T. germanicum* on Castleconnell Bog. Some looser tufts with much finer stems (but not as flexuous as on Firville Bog) were also seen in the same area of bog, and again round leaf-sheath openings and shiny black nuts were noted (e.g. R679.630). Specimens from both bogs were considered good *T. cespitosum* s.s. by Ian Green, who then sent them on to be checked and confirmed by the BSBI referee Jeremy Roberts. A good site that needed re-recording was Graigues Lough in the northern limestone area of the county SE of Askeaton, which falls into two monads. This turlough-like area is bordered by wet grassland, some drier calcareous grassland and scrub, and a few limestone boulders. While I was trying to record everything, Julian spotted bushes of *Rhamnus cathartica* (Buckthorn) and patches of protected *Viola hirta* (Hairy Violet), a new site for both species (3 August, R36.47, R36.48). There was more *Thalictrum flavum* (Common Meadow-rue) than noted previously, growing near *Lysimachia vulgaris* (Yellow Loosestrife) (R36.47). Nearly all the 2004 species were refound.

The following day, we made a brief stop to look at the gravel car park beside the Palatine Heritage Museum in Rathkeale (4 August, R35.41), formerly the railway station. Both *Chaenorhinum minus* (Small Toadflax) and *Diplotaxis muralis* (Annual Wall-rocket) are still common there. On a nearby damp gravel path were many *Epilobium* (Willowherb)



See book reviews
pages 58 – 62.



Left: *Epipactis helleborine* (Broad-leaved Helleborine).
Photo: R. McMullen © 2009

Below: site of *Epipactis helleborine*. Photo: R. McMullen © 2014.

See page 16.





Left: At the launch of the Limerick Flora on 15 May 2013, Matthew Jebb presented Sylvia Reynolds with the National Botanic Gardens gold medal for her 'contributions to Irish botany'. Photo: V. Rowe © 2013.

Below: BSBI President Ian Denholm presenting Ralph Forbes & Robert Northridge the 'President's Prize' awarded by the BSBI and Wild Flower Society for their *Flora of County Fermanagh*. Photo: M. Long © 2013.





Field meeting at BSBI Irish AGM, Killarney National Park, pointing at *Baldellia ranunculoides* (Lesser Water-plantain). Photo: M. Long © 2013



West Donegal field meeting. Photo: M. Long © 2013. See page 47.

plants, including *E. roseum* (Pale Willowherb) and *E. tetragonum* (Square-stalked Willowherb), the latter only noted for the first time in the county in Limerick City in 2012. They were growing with *Cardamine flexuosa* (Wavy Bitter-cress), *Lepidium didymum* (Lesser Swine-cress), *Veronica agrestis* (Green Field-speedwell) and other weedy species.

The afternoon was spent in a hunt for Lough Aguole in the hills W of Ballingarry, last visited in 1998 and 1999. We thought we knew the access up to it, but found ourselves taking a wrong lane. After some backwards and forwarding along a forestry road, we eventually saw the overgrown pond some way below us, now surrounded by a conifer plantation. Without any apparent inflow or outflow, the open water of Lough Aguole (4 August, R39.35) was bordered by swampy vegetation with dense *Menyanthes trifoliata* (Bogbean), stands of *Carex rostrata* (Bottle Sedge), *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* (Marsh Pennywort), *Molinia caerulea* (Purple Moor-grass) and an extensive area of *Juncus acutiflorus* (Sharp-flowered Rush) – the last with well-formed capsules and immature seeds. Such fertile *J. acutiflorus* was rarely found during fieldwork for the Limerick Flora and not always distinguished from *J. x surrejanus*. Fertile plants were seen in several places in Limerick in 2013, so was the hot summer a factor in good capsule development? Compared to the late 1990s, there was much less open muddy ground around Lough Aguole, with only a few plants of *Ranunculus hederaceus* (Ivy-leaved Crowfoot) and *Lythrum portula* (Water-purslane).

Further monad recording was done in R11 on 1 September, for example, along the edge of the R. Feale near Mountcollins (R15.18), with *Euphorbia hyberna* (Irish Spurge) and where non-native *Mimulus guttatus* (Monkeyflower) was in flower and fruit. Heathy roadside banks SSE of Mountcollins close to where Cos Limerick, Cork and Kerry meet fall into three monads, and characteristic species (e.g. in R16.17) included *Erica cinerea* (Bell Heather), *Hypericum pulchrum* (Slender St John's-wort), *Jasione montana* (Sheep's-bit), *Solidago virgaurea* (Goldenrod) and *Teucrium scorodonia* (Wood Sage). We also looked at the strip of woodland above the R. Feale just NW of the bridge (R16.16, R16.17) more carefully than on a previous visit. It is mainly a *Quercus petraea* (Sessile Oak) wood, with *Corylus avellana* (Hazel) and *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn). The ground flora contained many gone-over plants of *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell), also *Dryopteris dilatata* (Broad Buckler-fern), *D. affinis* agg. (Scaly Male-ferns, possibly *D. borrieri*, R16.16), *D. aemula* (Hay-scented Buckler-fern, R16.17) and scattered *Luzula pilosa* (Hairy Wood-rush, R16.16, R16.17). There is marshy ground between the wood and the river, and *Achillea ptarmica* (Sneezewort) was spotted by Julian on outcrop at the

river's edge (R16.16). Up onto higher boggy ground SE of Mountcollins (R19.18), all the *Trichophorum* was found to be *T. germanicum*; and *Nardus stricta* (Mat-grass), new to the hectad, was seen growing on a track.

In mid-August, Geoff Hunt had emailed me some plant lists, including one with *Utricularia minor* (Lesser Bladderwort) on a bog in the western uplands – a completely new site in Limerick, but not too far from where it has been recorded in N Kerry. We then wanted to see it for ourselves on Glenastar blanket bog (R24.39), where we had never been. *U. minor*, some still in flower on 11 September, was common in the peaty water of a wide cutting (R247.395), with *Sphagnum*, *Potamogeton polygonifolius* (Bog Pondweed) and *Juncus bulbosus* (Bulbous Rush), and where there was *Rhynchospora alba* (White Beak-sedge) along the edge of the cutting. *Vaccinium oxycoccos* (Cranberry) was locally common and *Osmunda regalis* (Royal Fern) was scattered across this wet bog, which would repay further exploration.

Having seen *Selaginella selaginoides* (Lesser Clubmoss) in Co. Sligo in July, we searched for it yet again in the fen area at Deegerty/Ballyvogue near Askeaton (R38.51) in early August, and again without success. It was found there on a BSBI meeting in 1974, but the fen habitat has since become degraded.

Of course as soon as the Limerick Flora was published, I was given some very good records, for example, *Asplenium viride* (Green Spleenwort) was refound in the Galty Mtns (R82) in 2013 by Paul Murphy and Mike Quirke, who also gave me additional sites for *Campanula rotundifolia* (Harebell), *Meconopsis cambrica* (Welsh Poppy) and *Saxifraga stellaris* (Starry Saxifrage). Work on the flora in the county is far from complete!

Recording in Wexford (H12), 2013

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Another very successful year, with over 20,000 records collected. As like with the last few years over 80% of the records are from the southern half of the county. Recording took place over the whole year, the month of September being the highest with 4004 records collected, December being the lowest month with 655 records. One of the projects for the year was to start identifying *Dryopteris affinis*, *D. borrieri* and *D. cambrensis* instead of lumping them under *D. affinis* agg. (Scaly Male-fern). *D. affinis* is proving to be common, *D. borrieri* scattered and *D. cambrensis* has yet to be found.

Something I had been meaning to do for several years was to check out all the sites for *Allium ampeloprasum* (Wild Leek), which I had only seen in leaf, to see which variety they were. To my surprised, all but one site were *Allium ampeloprasum* var. *ampeloprasum*, now known from 6 tetrads within the county. The other site proved to be *A. ampeloprasum* var. *babingtonii* growing in several places on the road banks of a T-junction at The Leap (S882.298), this being the first record for the county.

I had two days in mid April collecting Dandelions, half were poorly pressed / dried and not identifiable. Of the rest, 7 were new county records: *Taraxacum acutifrons* – road verge at Ballynamona, (S820.190); *T. argutum* – on Abbey Bridge, Kayle (S802.187); *T. curtifrons* – side of wall, Pollfur (S781.066); *T. hamiferum* – road bank, Baginbun (S798.033); *T. lacerifolium* – by Tintern Abbey (S794.099); *T. platyglossum* – open dune, Booley Bay (S749.060); *T. quadrans* – on bridge, Bryanstown (S824.177). All determined by John Richards.

Because of illness and work commitments, I spent very little time in the county botanising during 2013. I did managed to find 3 new county records to add to the *Taraxacum* above: *Gaultheria shallon* (Shallon) large patch under trees, Edenvale (T040.276), *Olearia traversii* (Ake-ake) one self-sown on side of wall, Slade (X744.984) and *Panicum miliaceum* (Common Millet) from 3 locations across the county: Bridgetown (S98.09), Kilrane (T13.10) & New Ross (S72.27).

Work towards a Flora of Wexford would not be possible without the help from local and visiting botanists. Below I have mentioned all the highlights that each individual who sent in records or did some recording with me during the year.

Dominic Berridge sent me a photo of *Chaenorhinum minus* (Small Toadflax) to identify for him from a flower border at Ballyshannon (S852.248), this being a new hectad record.

Zoe Devlin found *Veronica agrestis* (Green Field-speedwell) & *Oenothera glazioviana* (Large-flowered Evening-primrose) in Ambrosetown Cemetery (S909.117), the latter new for the hectad. Eamon Gaughan & Pat Lenihan found *Puccinellia distans* (Reflexed Saltmarsh-grass) in a dune slack on Ballyteige Burrows (S94.05), a new tetrad record. Their *Polygonum oxyspermum* subsp. *raii* (Ray's Knotgrass) from the strandline at Ballyteigue (S946.051) is also a new tetrad record and the first from the hectad since 1990.

Shane Farrel found a few plants of *Senecio aquaticus* (Marsh Ragwort) in the marsh south of Cahore Point (T24), the first record for the hectad since 1990.

Roger Goodwillie was surprised to come across *Geranium columbinum* (Long-stalked Crane's-bill) on the side of a narrow field west of Doo Lough (T098.296), a new hectad record.

While visiting the back of Bannow Bay with Adeline L'Hemann and Olivier Martin, and looking at *Carex distans* (Distant Sedge) along the wet margin of the road, just up from St Kieran's Quay (S811.094), we noticed 22 plants of *Centaureum pulchellum* (Lesser Centaury). This is a new hectad record, 13 kilometres further west than the nearest county site at The Cull, Ballyteigue. Interestingly enough, I had walked along this stretch of road many times before, as it is the nearest stretch of coast to my house.

Jane Musgrove sent in records collected since 2011 from the Kilmichael & Kilpatrick area (T26), a number of these were new for the hectad including *Lonicera japonica* (Japanese Honeysuckle) & *Trifolium micranthum* (Slender Trefoil). Jane's *Epipactis helleborine* (Broad-leaved Helleborine) was the first record from the northern part of the county since 1992.

Paula O'Meara, now joint BSBI vice-county recorder with me, added 6 new county records: *Allium christophii* on waste ground at Campile (S723.154), *Crambe maritima* (Sea-kale) two plants on shingle at Churchtown (X734.987), an escape from a nearby garden, *Euphorbia amygdaloides* subsp. *robbiae* (Turkish Wood Spurge) by the site of a derelict farm at Stokestown (S695.231), *Malcolmia maritima* (Virginia Stock) several plants flowering, self-seeded between graves, Ballyhack Graveyard (S710.105), *Rubus tricolor* (Chinese Bramble) self-seeded on lane ditch at Great Island (S685.165) and *Vitis vinifera* (Grape-vine) established by a fence at Horeswood (S718.160).

Sylvia Reynolds updated a tetrad record for *Veronica polita* (Grey Field-speedwell) by MacMurrough House (S73.29), last reported from S72J in 1995.

Markus Schmidt had *Foeniculum vulgare* (Fennel) on the sea-cliffs at Cahore Point (T22.47), a species which seems to be confined to the coast in the county.

Frankie Tennant & Roy Watson found *Poterium sanguisorba* subsp. *sanguisorba* (Salad Burnet) on the side of a forest road at Ballycrystal (S867.514) where it is likely to be an introduction brought in with gravel to build the forest road, a new hectad record. *Trifolium occidentale* (Western Clover) from the cliffs at Sandeel Bay (S76.01) is the first record from the Hook Head peninsula. Their *Scutellaria minor* (Lesser Skullcap) from Shelmaliere Commons (S980.189) is only the fourth county record since 1991. Roy Watson told me about *Medicago sativa* subsp. *varia* (Sand Lucerne) at Grogan Burrow (T076.052) which I thought was a new county record until he told me he had known it there for at least 25 years. He then told me it used to grow by the old

bacon factory (T054.212) in Wexford town. I checked out both and sure enough it was there in both sites.

The records for the county have been analysed to see where there are gaps and which parts of the county needs attention. Of the 688 whole or part tetrads that fall within Wexford there are 96 with no records, 147 tetrads with 20 or less species, 123 tetrads with 21 to 100 species, 178 tetrads with 101 to 200 species, 101 tetrads with 201 to 299 species. Of the remaining 43 tetrads, 4 have over 400 species recorded, the highest being S71C with 467 species. This tetrad includes Dunbrody Abbey, some very rich brackish marsh with species like *Carex divisa* (Divided Sedge) and *Hordeum secalinum* (Meadow Barley). A list of 211 species not recorded from the county post 2000 has been drawn up. Of these 115 are native. It is hoped in 2014 that some of the native species will be refound and some of the tetrads with no records will be visited. If you would like to take on a tetrad or like to try and refind a species please do get in touch. More information can be found on the BSBI Wexford webpage at: http://bsbi.org.uk/co__wexford.html

Interesting Plants in Tyrone (H36), 2012-13

Ian McNeill, 86 Fair Hill, Cookstown, Co. Tyrone, BT80 8DE

2012 was not a good year for outstanding finds in Co Tyrone, but 2013 more than made up for it.

Vulpia myuros (Rat's-tail Fescue)

In September 2012, I was driving through Aughnacloy when a couple of tall Fennel plants drew my attention to a patch of waste ground. I parked and had a closer look, and came across several plants of *Vulpia myuros*, new to the county.

Viscum album (Mistletoe)

Early in 2013, our local Cookstown Wildlife group had a panel discussion, and Mistletoe came up as a topic. I said that there were old records of Mistletoe from Tyrone (Cookstown and Omagh in the 1920-40 period), but none recently. A member said, no, I was wrong, for he knew it to grow in the townland of Leck, a few km SE of Cookstown. Ronnie Irvine and I visited the site in late February, and, sure enough, there was a healthy, and probably spreading, colony. The local farmer told us his father had planted Mistletoe berries on two hawthorn bushes in the garden around 1950. Not only was it still on the two bushes, but it had

spread to a garden apple tree, to another hawthorn across the road, to several lime trees some 100m along the road, and to a crab-apple tree over 200m away. Many of the bunches were heavily berried, especially on the two original bushes.

Mycelis muralis (Wall Lettuce)

I discovered one plant of Wall Lettuce growing on a wall in Caledon village in May 2013. As it was not in flower at that date, I returned in September to check it, and found it had flowered quite strongly. Hopefully, it will seed itself. There is quite a lot of Wall Lettuce on walls around Castle Leslie, at Glaslough, only a few km from Caledon, in County Monaghan, but I had not recorded it before from Co Tyrone.

Medicago sativa subsp. *sativa* (Lucerne)

In June 2013, I found a lot of this fodder crop species growing on the approaches to a large barley-field at the edge of Ardstraw village. Presumably, the area had been used as a collecting point for a fodder crop in some recent year, and the Lucerne had thrown seed. There are no previous records from Tyrone that I am aware of, although past botanists may well have disregarded plants derived from agricultural crops.

Vicia sylvatica (Wood Vetch)

The Woodland Trust did a lot of surveys of woodland in Tyrone in the early 2000s, and produced two records of this lovely vetch. One was from Claragh woods, NE of Drumquin, and they thought it native there. I visited the site in 2012, and found it disturbed for house-building and saw no sign of the plant. The other Woodland Trust site was at Holly Hill, some 5km NE of Strabane, where native status might be more questionable. In June 2013, I found it on a roadside bank just N of Drumquin. There was a cottage nearby, with everlasting Sweet Pea just alongside the vetch in the hedge. Perhaps the vetch came in as a contaminant in a seed-packet of the everlasting Sweet Pea? I would not claim it as native at the site.

Polypogon viridis (Water Bent)

This plant was first seen in Cookstown in 2011. In June 2013, it turned up in Cookstown again, about 1km away from the 2011 site. Factors common to both sites would suggest it came in via plants sold by various stallholders at Cookstown's very active Saturday market.

Sarracenia purpurea (Pitcher Plant)

In July 2013, Ian Rippey reported to me that this was now growing on the bog at Creggan, mid-way between Cookstown and Omagh. He said it was reported to him by Mrs Sandra Jones of Omagh. I visited the site late in the year, but failed to see it. Almost certainly it has been deliberately planted. It was planted a few years ago at Peatlands Park (about 35km distant, in Co Armagh).

Carum verticillatum (Whorled Caraway)

In July 2013, I received word that a Department of Environment (NI) field-worker, Alastair Church, had found *Carum verticillatum* growing at a site some km SW of Drumquin. This is probably the most outstanding new species for Tyrone in recent years, as it is a native plant, almost certainly there by natural processes – so many other new species are mere casuals, likely to be ephemeral, and often outright aliens. Elsewhere in Ireland, *C. verticillatum* has major colonies in Co Derry and Co Kerry, and occurs also at scattered sites in other N and W coastal counties.

Finally, a correction and apology. In my Tyrone article in the March 2012 edition of Irish Botanical News, I had suggested that the finding of *Lepidium virginicum* (Least Pepperwort) in Cookstown may have been a first for Ireland. Clearly a combination of wishful thinking and sheer carelessness! Atlas 2000 shows it to have been long-established, and still current, in Co Limerick, with scattered old records from sites near the east coast.

Co. Down (H38) recording in 2013

Graham Day, *Cherry Cottage, 11 Ballyhaft Road, Newtownards,
Co. Down, BT22 2AW*

Monthly field meetings were organised in support of the proposed flora of Co. Down and to make records under the new date-class. Thanks go to Daphne Donnelly, John Kirk, Roger Field, Margaret Marshall, David McNeill, David McCormick and Mark Wright who sent records to me.

Visits were made along the western shore of Strangford Lough and mid-Down coast in April and early May to record *Cochlearia* spp. In mid-May a visit to Rowallane garden produced an extremely large colony of *Equisetum sylvaticum* (Wood Horsetail).

Mark Wright sent a number of detailed recording sheets from north

Down in May and June. Most notably, he visited Cregagh Glen in east Belfast where he recorded *Galium odoratum* (Woodruff) and *Meconopsis cambrica* (Welsh Poppy). In June, Daphne Donnelly sent record of *Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid) from the Belfast Harbour Estate. Unfortunately, days later she sent word that mowers had cut the plants down.

In early July, *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* (Frog-bit) was found abundantly at Glastry Clay Pits. At this known station *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* (Floating Pennywort), *Crassula helmsii* (New Zealand Pigmyweed), *Lemna minuta* (Least Duckweed), *Azolla filiculoides* (Water Fern) and *Typha angustifolia* (Lesser Bulrush) were re-found. Also in early July, Paul Hackney, John Kirk, Julia Nunn and I re-found *Vicia sylvatica* (Wood Vetch), *Eupatorium cannabinum* (Hemp-agrimony), *Asplenium marinum* (Sea Spleenwort), *Glaucium flavum* (Yellow Horned-poppy) and *Mertensia maritima* (Oysterplant) on the Bloody Bridge coastal path south of Newcastle.

Rostrevor was visited in early July. *Scrophularia auriculata* (Water Figwort) and single specimens of *Barbarea verna* (American Winter-cress) and *Heracleum mantegazzianum* (Giant Hogweed) were found in the Fairy Glen. A meeting with Belfast Naturalist's Field Club in the Oak Wood produced *Dryopteris borrieri*, *Luzula pilosa* (Hairy Wood-rush), *Sanicula europaea* (Sanicle), *Galium odoratum* and by the forestry buildings, *Crepis biennis* (Rough Hawk's-beard).

C. biennis and *D. borrieri* were also recorded with *Bidens tripartita* (Trifid Bur-marigold) by Shane's Lough near Killyleagh at the end of July. In early August *Dryopteris cambrensis* and *Daphne laureola* (Spurge-laurel) were seen at Farranfad near Clough.

In mid-August Newcastle was visited and recording made around Donard Park and the south of the town centre. A thorough search along the Glen River produced four large *Arbutus unedo* (Strawberry-tree) trees, but no young plants were seen; presumably those seen previously by Paul Hackney and I in 2004 were killed by hard winters. *Hypericum humifusum* (Trailing St John's-wort) was found on a gravelly road verge in a housing development. Ian McNeill's find of *Diplotaxis tenuifolia* (Perennial Wall-rocket) behind the Tourist Information office was searched for, but not re-found, probably because of extensive herbicide spraying. Also in mid-August, *Myrrhis odorata* (Sweet Cicely), *Sedum rupestre* (Reflexed Stonecrop), *S. spurium* (Caucasian-stonecrop) and a single mature *Pyrus communis* (Pear) were noted by roadsides south of Castlewellan.

In the Mournes, David McNeill recorded *Juniperus communis* (Juniper), *Salix herbacea* (Dwarf Willow) and *Rhynchospora alba* (White Beak-sedge) on

and close by Slieve Commedagh in late August. I found *Lycopodium clavatum* (Stag's-horn Clubmoss), *Equisetum palustre* (Marsh Horsetail), *Dryopteris cambrensis* and *Veronica scutellata* (Marsh Speedwell) by Slievenamuck.

Diplotaxis muralis (Annual Wall-rocket) (the second county record and first since Praeger in 1934) was found by Julia Nunn and I growing on waste ground by the promenade in Millisle in late October. Similar sites were checked in other coastal villages, but without further record.

I have been recording bird-seed introductions in the vegetable patch annually and this year, *Amaranthus retroflexus* (Common Amaranth), *Ammi majus* (Bullwort), *Datura stramonium* (Thorn-apple), *Nicandra physalodes* (Apple-of-Peru), *Digitaria sanguinalis* (Hairy Finger-grass), *Echinochloa crus-galli* (Cockspur) and *Setaria pumila* (Yellow Bristle-grass) have appeared.

Field meeting reports, 2013

Carrhill Woods, Bunclody, Co. Wexford (H12), 11th May

After our small party meet in Bunclody town centre on the Saturday afternoon, we walked the one kilometre to the nearby Carrhill Woods (S913.576) in order to view the abundant stands of *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* (Yellow Archangel) that this site is renowned for. These woodlands are a mixture of broadleaf and coniferous trees and combined with varying geological and edaphic conditions offer a variety of vegetation communities. The woodlands are situated on a hill that runs down to the Slaney and is a beautiful location for walkers and botanists. The weather on the day was cool and showery, with one or two very heavy hail showers in the afternoon. Despite the un-May like conditions on the day and the unusually cold spring, the woodlands did not disappoint.

The walk started with a ramble across flat sheep grazed grassland that offers stunning views of the woodlands and the Slaney. The entrance to the woodlands (S9120.5767) was our first stop as one of the four stands of *L. galeobdolon* occurs here. A total of 12 flowering heads were counted with many more in the early budding stage. *Silene dioica* (Red Campion) grows along the river bank here but had not yet flowered. Other species recorded include *Viola riviniana* (Common Dog-violet), *Anemone nemorosa* (Wood Anemone), *Sanicula europaea* (Sanicle), with a canopy of *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly), *Corylus avellana* (Hazel), *Prunus* sp, and *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech).

The second stand of *L. galeobdolon* occurs along the edge of the

woodland and an improved grassland field (S9129.5807). With only 5 flowering heads counted, this stand is in danger of being lost due to the grazing in the field and clearance of the field margin. With the recent modifications around the field edge, floral diversity is quite low. Abundant numbers of *Urtica dioica* (Common Nettle) along the woodland edge are evidence of fertilizers being applied to the newly re-seeded field. Among species recorded here were *Stachys sylvatica* (Hedge Woundwort), *Potentilla sterilis* (Barren Strawberry) and *Ajuga reptans* (Bugle). Of concern is the presence of numerous shoots of *Impatiens glandulifera* (Indian Balsam), despite the location being well removed from the Slaney and any other waterbody.

The disappointment of the vulnerability of this stand of *L. galeobdolon* was somewhat offset by the majestic carpet of *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell) throughout the woodlands in this area. Tens of thousands of plants presented a stunning vista and we agreed it was perhaps the most impressive Bluebell display seen by us in any Irish woodland.

The walk continued on through the woodlands with Paula O' Meara aiding in the identification of the different ferns that grow abundantly along the pathways. Ferns encountered include *Dryopteris filix-mas* (Male-fern), *Dryopteris affinis*, *Anthyrium filix-femina* (Lady-fern) and *Dryopteris borreieri*. Rocky outcrops and cliff faces are scattered throughout the area and are rich in bryophytes and stands of *Umbilicus rupestris* (Navelwort).

The next stop was at a junction of the two pathways where in a small 'island' approximately 10 metres long and 3 wide, another stand of *L. galeobdolon* is found (S9131.5818). Ten flowering heads of *L. galeobdolon* were counted here with other budding ones hidden among the vegetation that included *Carex sylvatica* (Wood-sedge), *Carex remota* (Remote Sedge), *Circaea lutetiana* (Enchanter's-nightshade), *Anthyrium filix-femina* and *Hypericum androsaemum* (Tutsan).

Our final stop was at a point where the woodlands transition from broadleaf into plantation conifers (S9133.5824). This fourth stand of *L. galeobdolon* is by far the most impressive. Hundreds of flowering plants have spilled from the woodland edge and occupy both sides of the gravel pathway. Many robust specimens were observed with some plants over 30 cm in height. It is rather unusual to see *L. galeobdolon* in an area dominated by coniferous trees as in Ireland it is a plant normally associated with *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash) and *Coryllus avellana* (Hazel) woodland as it is a plant that prefers calcareous conditions. Plant species amongst this stand was low but *Schedonorus giganteus* (Giant Fescue), *Scrophularia nodosa* (Common Figwort), *Hypericum pulchrum* (Slender St John's-wort) and *Epilobium parviflorum* (Hoary Willowherb) are

plentiful.

L. galeobdolon subsp. *montanum* is currently recorded from only seven hectads throughout the east and southeast of Ireland and the populations at Carrhill are of national importance. The abundance of the plant here is only surpassed by the population at Knocksink Wood in Co. Wicklow. Overall the woodlands are in good shape although there are a number of possible issues such as the continuing conifer planting, rampant spread of *Acer pseudoplatanus* (Sycamore) and the encroachment of *Impatiens glandulifera*. Our short excursion to the woodlands was well rewarded and although no rarities were recorded by us on the day, the vivid yellow of the *L. galeobdolon* flowers against the duller woodland backdrop made it a worthwhile trip. For anyone who has not encountered *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* on their forays then a trip to Carrhill between April and June is a must!

Seán Meehan

Maritime plants, Co. Sligo (H28) & Glencar, Co. Leitrim (H29) 13th & 14th July

With prompting from John Faulkner and with assistance from Maria Long, Don Cotton and I agreed to host two adjacent field meetings in Cos Sligo and Leitrim.

Both meetings were well attended with 17-20 present and the weather was kind.

Saturday was planned as an educational meeting for beginners with the themes of how to use identification books and how to classify habitats based upon observations of the vascular plant flora. We went 'salt marshing' under Don's direction and had a most interesting and informative amble along the shore of Streedagh Estuary examining and noting the zonation of the plant species as the habitats varied between the tidal waters and the sand dunes. No rare or unexpected plants were encountered during this segment of the meeting and time was devoted to the use of keys.

In the late afternoon Don brought those with a hunger for less common species to another shoreline site in Drumcliff Bay to view Dwarf Eelgrass (*Zostera noltei*) and marvel at clumps of Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*) growing about an outcrop of tufa within a few metres of high water mark. The same rock also supported Blue moor-grass (*Sesleria caerulea*) and Quaking-grass (*Briza media*). The saltmarsh at this location was quite different to that seen in the morning as it had components of freshwater flush communities mixed in with a salt tolerant flora. Here there was a thriving

quantity of Saltmarsh Flat-sedge (*Blysmus rufus*), a stand of Grey Club-rush (*Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*), Black-bog rush (*Schoenus nigricans*), Long-bracted Sedge (*Carex extensa*), False Fox-sedge (*Carex otrubae*), Parsley Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe lachenalii*), Few-flowered Spike-rush (*Eleocharis quinqueflora*), Brookweed (*Samolus valerandi*) and Celery-leaved buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*).

A most interesting and enjoyable day.

On Sunday we gathered at the Leitrim end of Glencar Lake and ventured into the somewhat secluded “Swiss Valley” which even Praeger described as ‘romantic’.

The limestone cliffs are spectacular and are home to ancient Yew and Juniper species. A search was made for Bird’s-nest Orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*) and Limestone Bedstraw (*Galium sternerii*) without success but Basalt Hawkweed (*Hieracium basalticola*), Atlantic Ivy (*Hedera hibernica*) and a selection of limestone grassland species of herbs were recorded. Several Silver-washed fritillary butterflies added some diversity to the interest of the day.

After lunch we attempted some fairly serious climbing on the north facing side of the Glencar Valley at Crockauns.

Although some of the hardiest members ventured to well over 350 m of strenuous climbing we did not locate any of the rare alpins.

We did however note that in a number of surviving flushes off the now wooded slopes, we recorded a number of typical flush species including *Carex dioica* (Dioecious Sedge), *Eriophorum latifolium* (Broad-leaved Cottongrass), *Eleocharis quinqueflora* (Few-flowered spike rush), as well as *Parnassia palustris* (Grass-of-Parnassus), *Crepis paludosa* (Marsh Hawk's-beard) and abundant amounts of *Pinguicula vulgaris* (Common Butterwort).

The “find” of the day was accredited to Fiona Devery whose eagle eye spotted one small clump of *Oreopteris limbosperma* (Lemon-scented fern).

An energetic but enjoyable day and again my thanks to Don and Maria for their support.

Michael Archer

Addendum:

As a foot note, a few weeks later Don brought me to a previously known locality near Lough Easkey in the Ox Mountains to search for the elusive Bog Orchid (*Hammarbya paludosa*). We eventually located approximately 20 plants in various stages of development.

We are hopeful that further intensive searching in nearby similar

habitats will yield more finds.
Another great day's botanizing.

Carnboy and Truskmore, W. Donegal (H35)
27th & 28th July

This trip was conceived as a start along the road to 2020 – recording at least a few of the tetrads that will be needed for the new New Botanical Atlas. Some further bait seemed prudent, so what better for the first day than machair at the peak of its annual flowering.

Six members turned up at Carnboy, just beyond the Donegal Airport (although none arrived by air). We walked north from the little harbour towards the NW corner of the peninsula. There was a reluctance to allow any scrap of visible greenery to go unidentified, which slowed our progress to less than 50m per hour. A small *Epipactis palustris* (Marsh Helleborine) colony had been the targeted end point, but we never reached it. That wasn't a problem, as for much of the route we had difficult avoiding trampling on the helleborines – we probably have to thank the current absence of grazing for what seems to be an expansion of the colony. Amid such a sea of ungrazed machair, there were moments when we could only stand and stare.

The Hebridean form of *Dactylorhiza fuchsia* (Common Spotted-orchid), was also expected, and was indeed plentiful. Its identity was never in doubt and, subjectively of course, we puzzled over why it could still be regarded by some as not warranting sub-specific status.

Other species of note included *Draba incana* (Whitlowgrass), *Gymnadenia borealis* (Heath Fragrant Orchid) and *Cerastium semidecandrum* (Little Mouse-ear). Although presumed to be common, *Poa pratensis irrigata* took most of us into new territory.

After lunch, we moved a few yards east and were in another tetrad, and another habitat. The shore of Carnboy Lough bumped up our list, but not with anything of particular note. However, more sandy habitats allowed us to complete the *Gymnadenia* set.

Sunday morning started fine, and we managed to escape the threatened thunderstorms. We traversed the bogs (mostly uncut) on the approach to Trusk Lough, to the west of Errigal Mountain.

We quickly found a large, dense stand of waist-high *Erica*. We assumed *Erica mackayana* (Mackay's Heath), but subsequent examination has proved it to be all *Erica x stuartii*, the hybrid with *Erica tetralix* (Cross-leaved Heath).

So much for our pre-conceptions that the hybrid has a habit more like *E. tetralix* than *E. mackayana*. The abandoned railway line gives easy access to some remote bogs and rocky crags, but despite a lot of searching, these were not found to hold anything of note. *Lobelia dortmanna* (Water Lobelia) on Trusk Lough was not a surprise, but in such abundance it was a welcome sight.

Although we didn't find too many notable species, we did get reasonable totals for four tetrads – so for VCH35, at three per hectad, that's just 110 or so to go.

Ralph Sheppard

Tara Hill, Gorey, Co. Wexford (H12), Saturday 16th November

A group of twelve BSBI members gathered at the base of Tara Hill on a bright and exceptionally mild day in November. Paul Green, Vice-county Recorder for Wexford, led the walk for this enthusiastic group. It was particularly nice to have the presence of the BSBI Irish Officer Maria Long. Catriona Brady, Vice-county Recorder for Co. Wicklow, Zoe Devlin, author of *Wildflowers of Ireland*, and Dominic Berridge, Conservation Ranger for south Wexford, were also present.

The purpose of the day was to look for *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense* (Tunbridge Filmy-fern) a small patch of which was last recorded from the western side of Tara Hill by H.G. Cuthbert in 1892 (*Irish Naturalist Journal*, Vol. I, 1892).

Tara Hill is an isolated hill near the Irish Sea coast in North Co. Wexford. Although only 253 metres high, it is prominent in the otherwise flat coastal landscape. Tara Hill is over 400 million years old and was formed from molten rock. The soil on the upper parts is shallow and acidic. The hillside is mostly forested with small areas of heath remaining which is encroached by dense bracken and gorse scrub.

We approached the hill through a small laneway bordered by an old stone wall. As we progressed, Paul Green explained how to distinguish between *Hedera helix* (Common Ivy) and *Hedera hibernica* (Atlantic Ivy). Paula O'Meara gave us the benefit of her expertise in distinguishing ferns particularly *Dryopteris filix-mas* (Male-fern) and *Dryopteris affinis* (Scaly Male-fern) which was recorded as a new record for this hectad.

Continuing our ascent up the hill through an area of felled forestry, the abundance of *Carex binervis* (Green-ribbed Sedge) was noted. Other sedges

recorded on the day included *C. demissa* (Common Yellow-sedge), *C. pilulifera* (Pill Sedge), *C. remota* (Remote Sedge) and the occurrence of *C. divulsa* subsp. *divulsa* (Grey Sedge) was noted as being the 4th record for the hectad. Self-sown forestry species recorded included *Abies procera* (Noble Fir), *Picea sitchensis* (Sitka Spruce) and *Pinus contorta* (Lodgepole Pine). Several new records for the hectad were recorded on the day including *Sagina filicaulis* (Upright Pearlwort), *Hedera helix* (Common Ivy) and the introduced species *Anemanthele lessoniana* (New Zealand Wind-grass), *Juncus tenuis* (Slender Rush) and *Lunaria annua* (Honesty). Also notable was the occurrence of *Arenaria leptoclados* (Slender Sandwort) being the second record for the hectad. Two clumps of *Dryopteris aemula* (Hay-scented Buckler Fern), which is generally scarce in the county, were spotted on the edge of the forest track. *Deschampsia flexuosa* (Wavy Hair-grass) was recorded as the only monad in the hectad. This species is recorded from just 18 tetrads in the county.

Both *Ulex gallii* (Western Gorse) and *Ulex europaeus* (Gorse) occur on Tara Hill and distinguishing these two species was a topic for discussion as we made our way up the hill. Rocky outcrops with potential for *H. tunbrigense* were a target and a lot of scrambling high and low was undertaken throughout the day in search of the elusive species.

We stopped for lunch by the side of the forest track with a nice view of Annagh Hill and Croghan Mountain in the distance. Continuing on, we were graced with another fantastic view south down the coast towards Cahore Point. Here on the rocky crags, *Sedum anglicum* (English Stonecrop) was recorded as the only monad in the hectad.

On our descent back towards the car park, we stopped to admire two specimens of *Malus sylvestris* (Crab Apple) in fruit, by a small car park. Cuttings were taken by Faith Wilson to send to the Seed Savers Association of this valuable heritage species.

In all, 174 records were recorded for the day but despite the best efforts of members, braving the reaches of brambles, bracken and gorse to reach those tempting rocky outcrops in search for *H. tunbrigense*, we did not re-locate it. However, this disappointment did not deter from a most enjoyable and informative day being had by all.

Deborah D'Arcy

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Irish branch of the
Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland
Knockreer House, Killarney, Co. Kerry
14th & 15th September, 2013**

(Unapproved)

In the Chair: Gerry Sharkey

Hon. Secretary: Fiona Devery

Attendance: Twenty six members attended the meeting.

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Paul Green, Sharon Parr, Don Cotton, David Dowsett, Chris Peppiatt, Declan Doogue, David Nash, John Faulkner, Melinda Lyons, Mark McCorry, Fiona McGowan, Jonathan Shackelton, Lisa Dowling, Con Breen, Ralph Shepard and Michael Wyse-Jackson.

Welcome:

The Chair welcomed the president of the BSBI, Ian Denholm and Jane Houldsworth, the new BSBI Head of Operations to the meeting.

Minutes of AGM 2012

The Minutes of the meeting were read, amended and approved.

Matters arising from the minutes:

Stephen Ward suggested that the minutes could be emailed to the members or displayed on the website and this was agreed.

The Hon. Secretary's and Chairman's Report 2012-2013

The Committee for Ireland met on four occasions during 2012-2013, on the 13th October 2012 in the County Museum Armagh, in 2013 on the 19th January in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, on 13th April in the County Museum Armagh and finally on 22nd June in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

Field meetings

John Faulkner, the Field Meeting Secretary, arranged a programme of twelve field meetings for the year, excluding the excursion to follow this AGM. These took place in the north - Armagh and Donegal, south – Kerry and Wexford (2), east – Wicklow, west – Mayo, Galway, Sligo and Leitrim and also Tipperary and Westmeath. Again some meetings had an educational theme as has been the

intention of the Committee for the past few years.

The work of the committee for Ireland

The CFI pleased to see that our name, BSBI, now denotes Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland. We appreciate that it is quite difficult for people who have little experience of Ireland and who come from a different tradition, why the phrase 'British Isles' is such a problem and how much the change could mean for publicity and recruiting, and we thank the many people who helped the long-running campaign for change, and the Society itself, notably including our President Ian Denholm for grasping the recent opportunity. First President of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland has a nice ring to it!

So now, our best excuse is no longer available, and we hope to be able to pursue substantial publicity and recruiting drives over the next couple of years so as to re-establish and cement our position as an important element within BSBI.

Irish Officer, Dr Maria Long

At the last AGM we were very pleased to present our Irish Officer, Dr Maria Long.

Maria will give her own report later, but I'd like to say as Chair that she has taken to the role with impressive enthusiasm and energy and has already achieved or made substantial inroads to many of the initial targets we set out on her appointment. It is difficult for anyone to step into a set of established and tradition-bound Committee – people and VCRs, but Maria has done this well with only two working days a week, while remaining always very pleasant and easy to work with. It is good to know that her position will continue to be funded by BSBI for another year at least, and now we must try to secure local funding for a continuation and expansion of the role.

The 50th anniversary of the BSBI in Ireland

Many members have mentioned the fact that we have not made much effort to mark our 50th anniversary. We are planning to do so in the remaining months of 2013 and in early 2014. Preliminary plans for an informal get-together at a Dublin venue later this year are being advanced, and we will hold a Members' conference in spring 2014. Any suggestions will be gratefully received, and we are particularly anxious to trace anyone with photographs, information, documents or other memorabilia of the early days of BSBI in Ireland. It is worth mentioning that a member or associate of BSBI who was 15 at the time is now 65, so many of the original group especially leading ones, like Maura Scannell and David Webb have gone, so information is not easy to find. You may have

family members with memories or memorabilia, please talk to them and let us know.

Projects:

A red list for Irish Vascular Plants:

BBSI CFI was pleased to accept an invitation to be a full partner with NIEA, NPWS and many other interested parties in a proposal to establish a new Vascular Plant Red List. A working group has been set up and Dr Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington has agreed to represent us on that group. The initial part of the project will involve use of 10k distribution data mostly from the last Atlas. Supply of more detailed data for agreed candidate species will be discussed as the project progresses.

The Committee Chair and Vice-Chair have begun a series of meetings and contacts with NBDC in the hope that we can achieve a resolution of the sometimes fractious relationship between NBDC and BSBI CFI. These inter-organisation contact groups will continue and expand to cover other GO and NGOs with an interest in BSBI and our activities. Working with these contact groups places a considerable burden on unpaid officers with limited resources and time, we need more active and enthusiastic members on or working with our committee to help with this sort of non-botanical but important work.

Flora of Connemara and the Burren

The long-promised re-emergence of this seminal work is closer to achievement, but has been much delayed. I understand that CUP have finally sent legal documents to the people in charge of the estates of Maura Scannell and David Webb, and as I have already cleared the project in principle with them, I hope for quick progress now.

BSBI / NUIG MoU

The Final Draft of the text of a Memo of Understanding between BSBI (the whole organisation, not just CFI) and the Plant Science department of the National University of Ireland – Galway has been approved by the BSBI Board of Trustees and is ready for formal signature, probably before the end of the year. Whether or not both parties want a big press announcement of this is currently under consideration.

CFI Changes

Under our rules and regulations no CFI member is allowed sit on the committee

for more than five years consecutively, this including periods of co-option to the committee. This means that there is one vacancy for filling at this AGM.

Our special thanks to Dr Caroline Mhic Daeid who has served at various levels on the committee for many years including as one of our representatives on the important BSBI 'Records' Committee. Caroline has been a friend and a tireless worker in our cause since long before I came on the CFI and will be hard to replace.

Also taking a rest from formal direct involvement with CFI is Paul Green, but he will continue to operate as editor of Irish Botanical News, work which we appreciate greatly and hope he continues for many years; Paul is continuing to recover from his recent illness and is now job-sharing as BSBI Officer for Wales. I'm sure this AGM will join me in sending Paul our best wishes for a continuing full and speedy recovery.

Vice-county Recorders changes

The Committee is committed to helping Vice-county Recorders in their work and has been ably assisted in this by our Irish Officer Dr Maria Long. Pauline Hudson has retired from E. Donegal (**H34**) and will now be joint recorder with Catriona Brady in Wicklow (**H20**). It is hoped to fill the vacancy in the near future.

Our network of recorders will be stretched to the limit by the plans (outlined on the BSBI website) leading up to and including the next Atlas project, for which recording should be taking place already; many of our best VCRs are now significantly older and while some will have no problem, others will not relish the thought of another round of square bashing for *Bellis* and *Plantago lanceolata*. Assistant recorders are a possible alternative, so we will try to match younger interested botanists with recorders and vice-counties where help would be appreciated, but this is a continuing problem.

Publications

This year saw the publication of another Flora by one of our Vice-county Recorders, the Flora of County Limerick by Sylvia Reynolds. The Committee wish to congratulate Sylvia on her wonderful publication and acknowledge the many years of hard work required to bring such a book to print. Sylvia was presented with the National Botanic Gardens Gold Medal on the day of the book launch, to the delight of all present.

The Committee also wish to thank Paul Green for his dedicated work in producing Irish Botanical News 23, February 2013, to his usual high standard.

Finally, we wish to thank the Committee for Ireland for their hard work

during the year and also to thank the County Museum Armagh and the Armagh Philosophical Society and the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin for accommodating our Committee meetings, as well as, in the case of the NBG, for their generous supply of space etc. for our Irish Officer.

Fiona Devery / Gerry Sharkey

Honorary Secretary, BSBI Committee for Ireland / Chair, BSBI Committee for Ireland.

Matters arising from the Report

In reply to the MoU with NUIG the President informed the members that the new Board of Trustees was looking at the MoU. He also stated that Lynne Farrell was looking through the archives of the BSBI and may have some items of Irish interest.

Sylvia Reynolds stated that she and the Chair will search the cabinet in the National Botanic Gardens called “Maura’s (Scannell) cabinet” for any archive material.

Pascal Sweeney suggested a stand at the ICEEM conference in November would raise the profile of the BSBI in Ireland and help to attract younger/more members to the Irish branch of BSBI. The Irish Officer, Maria Long, replied that she will be attending the conference and has plans to hand out application forms/fliers.

The President added that the new Flier will be out soon. He also stated that the use of “intern vice-county recorders” was working out well in Britain.

Stephen Ward suggested that perhaps an article by Michael Viney on the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland to mark the change in name would also help raise the profile of the society.

The Irish Officers Report

Report from Irish Officer, one year in.

BSBI Irish Regional Branch AGM, 14/15 Sept, 2013, Killarney.

It’s been a busy year. Some of you have heard a lot from me, others not so much. That depends largely on who has been in touch to look for help or support.

Remember that it’s just 2 days a week. I guess last year I didn’t know what I was letting myself in for!!

VCR meetings – how many? 17 so far, out of 38, so nearly half.

DDb - 1.7 million records for Ireland on the DDb, with 378,357 of these since 2000 (i.e. 22%).

MapMate – workshop 10 VCRs, ongoing support to a number of others, including home visits.

Data management – support, e.g. setting up Excel.

Irish VCR Newsletter – lots of news, feel part of a team/group. Foster discussion as well as relationships. Also: Pieces for *BSBI News*, *IBN*.

Field meetings – Been to 5 out of 11 this summer. Lots of clashes. Successful. Lots of promotion.

Education/Local groups – e.g. Galway, ‘Training the Leaders’ weekend in Edinburgh, e.g.

Promotion: 2x BioBlitz, also leaflets in various places and at various events.

Facebook page - >130 ‘likes’, most are not members, so this is good.

Webpage:

Lots of **contact from the public** – random questions. **Offers of help** – a good thing!... need to capitalise!

Attended: Record’s Committee, Recorder’s Conference Shrewsbury, 2x Country Officers mtgs Edinburgh, will be going to the AEM.

Plans:

- Atlas 2020 – support VCRs to get out recording and to get records sent in!
- VCR meetings – continue, start setting targets – lead by VCRs in this though, not dictated
- MM – workshops, home visits
- DDb – continue to liaise with manager, continue to support VCRs to use it
- Recorder’s Conference – planned for Mar/Apr 2014, lots of ideas for talks and workshops, e.g. aquatics, eyebrights, MM, DDb, current/recent botanical research in Irl, ...)
- Irish VCR nwsltr – nxt one in Oct

- Planning field meetings – diverse range, emphasis on education and enticing new members
- Webpage – develop into a useful resource

I will finish by reminding everyone that I am here to be a point of contact, so use me. If I can't help you, I am good at finding ways to get help. I need to know what VCRs want/need support with.

Maria Long

After a short Q & A session during which it was stated that the importance of the position of Irish Officer should be emphasised, Robert Northridge thanked Maria for her hard work and enthusiasm throughout the year and this was endorsed by the President.

Election of Officers

The room was reminded that all members are eligible for election. Gerry Sharkey, having one year left to serve as Chairman, remains in the Chair. John Faulkner also has one year to serve and so remains Vice- Chairman.

As Paul Green is retiring from the committee this year, a new committee member is required to be elected. Paul was thanked for his work on the Committee and it was noted that he will remain editor of Irish Botanical News.

The Chair proposed that the remaining Committee members be re-elected and this was carried unanimously. The Chair then asked for nominees to be proposed for election. No nominations were received. Robert Northridge then proposed Sylvia Reynolds and this was seconded by Daniel Kelly.

The Chair then proposed that, due to time restraints, the reports from Vice-County recorders be submitted to the IBN.

AOB:

A note was read from Lynne Farrell informing the members that the 2014 BSBI AGM will be in Scotland and that it is hoped that the 2015 AGM will take place in Northern Ireland.

Address from the President Ian Denholm and introduction of Jane Houldsworth, the new Head of Operations

The President addressed the members setting out the new status of the Society as a charitable company and change of name to the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland. The Head of Operations, Jane Houldsworth introduced herself to the members outlining her background and her new job. A short Q and A session

followed.

Close:

The Chair thanked the President and the Head of Operations for their contribution and the members for attending the AGM. He also thanked the NPWS for allowing the Society to use the centre and facilities. He then formally closed the AGM and hoped all would enjoy the fieldtrip the following day.

Fiona Devery / Gerry Sharkey

Honorary Secretary, BSBI Committee for Ireland / Chair, BSBI Committee for Ireland

September 2013

Book Reviews

The Wild Plants of Bere, Dursey, Whiddy and other Islands in Bantry Bay.

John Akeroyd (editor) 2013. 240 pages, softback, with numerous colour photographs. A Sherkin Island Marine Station Publication. €20. ISBN-13: 978-1-870492-48-5.

The panoramic and scenically majestic peninsulas and islands of SW Cork have always been a lodestone for botanists, not least because this region (along with neighbouring Co. Kerry) is the headquarters of the Hyberno-Cantabrian floral element in the Irish Flora. While many botanical records have accrued for this magical region of Co. Cork during the time-period c.1740-1976, *systematic* collation of plant records, and *comprehensive, detailed* recording of the flora of Roaringwater Bay (and, subsequently, the adjoining Bantry Bay) only began in 1976, following on the establishment of Sherkin Island Marine Station, by Cork man, Matt Murphy, and his wife, Eileen.

The catalyst for change was Matt Murphy's ability to draw a coterie of volunteer botanists' to Sherkin (i.e. botanists of Irish, British, European and North American extraction), from which base they set out to survey the neighbouring islands and islets. Moreover, professional botanist and gene-ecologist, John Akeroyd, enthusiastically combined with the other workers'; acted as overseer; collated all records; and edited the groundbreaking botanical publications that subsequently flowed from their protracted endeavours. The initial product was the excellent florula, *The Wild Plants of Sherkin, Cape Clear and adjacent Islands of West Cork* (Akeroyd 1996), a book uniquely enhanced

by the delightful, accurate, inimitable, floral plates, drawn by Elspeth Beckett. Further work in Roaringwater Bay added to the floral-lists for the islands, this up-to-date data being published in a *SUPPLEMENT* (Akeroyd *et al.* 2011).

Following on these achievements, attention was once again focused on the islands of the adjacent Bantry Bay, and a similar intensity of recording effort resulted in the production of the beautifully-crafted florula, *The Wild Plants of Bere, Dursey, Whiddy and other islands in Bantry Bay* (Akeroyd 2013). The numerous, evocative, colour photographs of wildflowers and habitats, are the work of Matt Murphy's son, Robbie, and considerably add to the appeal of this book. The Introductory section (pages 8-39) includes chapters on: the environment and history of the islands; climate; geology and soils; vegetation and plant communities; human history, land-ownership and land-use; history of botanical exploration. Pages 42-72 take us on a brief photographic 'tour' of Bere, Dursey, Whiddy and Garinish islands (a sketch-map of each island is included), this *visual* display providing an intimacy of the terrain and its topography, that word-descriptions alone cannot adequately convey. The systematic plant-list (pages 80-217) covers pteridophytes (ferns), gymnosperms (conifers), angiosperms (flowering plants) and charophytes (stoneworts). This account provides interesting information on plant species that were utilised medicinally (or cosmetically) by the islanders of Bantry Bay in past centuries.

The Comparative Floras of Bantry Bay and Roaringwater Bay

Part of the intrigue and excitement of botanical explorations in Bantry Bay and in neighbouring Roaringwater Bay, is the fact that the floras of both regions are largely *complementary*, rather than being mirror-images of each other. This, in part, is due to the fact that Bantry Bay is *virtually devoid* of calcareous habitats (and thus of calcareous plant species), in stark contrast to Roaringwater Bay, which latter exclusively supports the calcicole taxa: *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Orchid), *Ophrys apifera* (Bee-orchid), *Geranium purpureum* (Little Robin) and *Raphanus raphanistrum* subsp. *maritimus* (Sea Radish). Yet both regions hold populations of the calcicole species, *Spiranthes spiralis* (Autumn lady's-tresses) and *Briza media* (Quaking-grass).

However, Bantry Bay boasts the *only* Co. Cork populations of *Cerastium arvense* (Field Mouse-ear), which are confined to Dursey Island, while *Stachys officinalis* (Betony) – now an inordinately rare wildflower on the island of Ireland – has populations on Bere and Dursey, otherwise only being known in Co. Cork from the nearby Beara Peninsula, with an outlier site close to Kinsale town, Mid Cork (**H4**). Moreover, the nationally rare fern species, *Asplenium onopteris* (Irish Spleenwort) is reported from a few sites on Whiddy

Island (*not* recorded in Roaringwater Bay to date), this being, perhaps, its only *island-site* in Co. Cork.

Of the Hiberno-Cantabrian element, *Saxifraga spathularis* (St Patrick's-cabbage) is locally common on Beara and Dursey, and *Pinguicula grandiflora* (Large-flowered Butterwort) is locally abundant on Bere; yet, in Roaringwater Bay, *Saxifraga spathularis* is very rare (only recorded from Sherkin), while *P. grandiflora* is absent as a native! Nevertheless, Bantry Bay and Roaringwater Bay share a fascinating suite of nationally rare plant species, including: *Carex punctata* (Dotted Sedge), *Chamaemelum nobile* (Chamomile), *Cicendia filiformis* (Yellow Centaury), *Euphorbia hyberna* (Irish Spurge), *Fumaria purpurea* (Purple Ramping-fumitory), *Parentucellia viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia), *Sagina subulata* (Heath Pearlwort), *Tuberaria guttata* (Spotted Rock-rose), *Trifolium micranthum* (Slender Trefoil), *Viola canina* (Heath Dog-violet) and *Viola lactea* (Pale Dog-violet).

This important book effectively brings to a conclusion, decades of plant-recording on the islands of SW Cork. Its publication is a fitting tribute to the many field botanists who so generously gave their time and skills to the recording effort.

Tony O'Mahony

References:

- Akeroyd, J. (ed.) (1996). *The Wild Plants of Sherkin, Cape Clear and adjacent Islands of West Cork*. Sherkin Island Marine Station.
- Akeroyd, J., Wolstenholme, L. & Poole, J. (2011). *Supplement to the Wild Plants of Sherkin, Cape Clear and adjacent Islands of West Cork*. Sherkin Island Marine Station.

A guide to Wildlife Walks in Waterford. Declan McGrath. 240 pp. Intacta Print Ltd., Waterford Airport Business Park, Waterford. €20 paperback. From local book shops or from D. McGrath, 10 The Estuary, King's Channel, Waterford. ISBN 978-0-9541062-4-9.

The fifth book in the collection *A guide to...* This wonderfully put together book by Declan McGrath includes 32 wildlife walks across Co. Waterford. The walks are split into five groups: Coastal, Upland, River & Lake, Forest & Inland and Urban. Each walk is accompanied by a map of the route, history of the area, wildlife to be seen, etc. This book has many stunning photos of the scenery you are to encounter on the walks. You can enjoy a leisurely woodland walk at Ballysaggartmore Towers, a strenuous walk in the Comeragh Mountains, a

paddle along the beach at Cunnigar to a stroll by the River Suir at Mount Congreve. The flora is well represented with 73 photos.

A must buy for any keen walker!

Paul Green

The Flora of County Limerick. Sylvia C.P. Reynolds. 589 pp. National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9, Ireland. €22.50 hardback. ISBN: 978-0-9575948-0-7.

This splendidly produced *Flora of County Limerick* (**H8**) by Sylvia Reynolds, with the assistance of her husband, Julian D. Reynolds, is to be very much welcomed.

The very strong family connections of the author and her family with Co. Limerick extending over some three centuries are reflected in many sections of this book and this provides an extra layer of interest not normally found in county floras. For example, Robert Donough O'Brien who was the first person to find *Schoenoplectus triqueter* (Triangular Club-rush) in Ireland in 1900 - or perhaps 1899 - in the vicinity of Limerick city is a great-grand-uncle of the author while her great-grand-aunt, Charlotte Grace O'Brien, co-authored with Matilda Knowles, then a leading Irish botanist in the employ of the National Museum of Ireland, the *Flora of the Barony of Shanid* published in 1907 in *The Irish Naturalist*. In more recent times other members of the author's family have further contributed to the flora of county Limerick. These family and other botanical links with Co. Limerick are described in fascinating detail in Chapter 2 which outlines the history of botanical records and recording in Co. Limerick and also includes a charming piece of doggerel verse on *Ononis arvensis*, now *Ononis repens* (Restharrow), penned by Charlotte Grace O'Brien for her friend Matilda Knowles who had apparently overlooked the species!

To the casual observer, Limerick may not appear as attractive, botanically speaking, as its neighbouring counties of Kerry and Clare. However, within its area of some 2755 sq. km. it possesses a very wide range of habitats ranging from the broad expanses of the estuary of the River Shannon through the limestone lowlands, now mainly given over to agricultural pastureland, to primarily acid uplands derived from mainly shales and sandstones rising to over 900m in the Galty Mountains in the south-east of the county. These topographical features and their accompanying plant habitats are comprehensively described in Chapters 3 and 4 of the *Flora*. Excellent photographs by the author and her husband illustrating a selection of the habitats

are very conveniently inserted in between these chapters. Chapter 4, describing the main plant habitats and their principal species in Co. Limerick, and Chapter 5 which analyses the present-day Flora provide much food for thought. The author humbly reminds that this Flora does not claim to be fully comprehensive and that much more botanical work remains to be done. These aspects are briefly detailed at the end of Chapter 5.

The bulk of the remainder of the book amounting to some 378 pages lists the species recorded in the county. This section, Chapter 6, contains site details for very many of the species together with the usual information about dates of first, and earlier records, for the County. This part of the book is very well done and contains much fascinating site detail e.g. for species such as *Schoenoplectus triqueter* (Triangular Club-rush) not available elsewhere. Small distribution maps on a 10-km square basis accompany many of the species' descriptions while an excellent gazetteer of 30 pages towards the end of the Flora will help the reader to locate sites referred to in Chapter 6.

In summary, then, this is a “must read” publication. I cannot too strongly congratulate the author and her capable assistant in providing us with such an excellent Flora. Despite the author's generous acknowledgement in the introductory chapters of assistance provided by many people this Flora is the largely the result of the author's gargantuan efforts in bringing it to publication. For that alone, the Irish, and wider, botanical community and I are eternally grateful.

Con Breen

The Wildflowers of Ireland – A Field Guide by Zoë Devlin is published (March 2014) by The Collins Press. It is available in all good bookshops and online from www.collinspress.ie. ISBN: 978-1-84889-2026. €14.99/£13.99. Paperback, 190 x 113 mm, 296 pp

The life of a wildflower hunter is never easy, as Zoë Devlin has discovered on her many expeditions – lost wellington boots, bad light, high winds and shy wildflowers often confound her efforts to photograph the wildflowers of Ireland. In this first comprehensive pocket guide to Irish wildflowers, discover the fascinating world of Ireland's diverse and astonishing collection of native wildflowers: from the insect-eating Sundew to the humble Harebell, this superbly illustrated guide features over 530 of the wildflowers of Ireland with more than 1,200 of the author's photographs.

For ease of identification, the species are divided into colour categories and within each category the species are grouped by, for example, the number

of petals in the flower or whether the species carries its flowers in a cluster or a spike. In easily understood terminology, focus is put on the main identifying features of each plant, by colour, size, shape of flower, leaf, habitat, flowering season, and where in Ireland it might be found.

This is a must for enthusiasts of all ages and experience and a complementary companion to the author's Wildflowers of Ireland – A Personal Record.

Zoë Devlin is passionate about wildflowers and the environment. She combined her interests in botany and photography by developing the website, www.wildflowersofireland.net. Zoë earnestly hopes this guide will encourage many, especially young people, to identify, understand and cherish wildflowers growing all around, if they only stop and look.

The Collins Press

Interested in helping us to Record the Irish Flora?

We need to recruit volunteers to assist our Recorder Network gather information for the next BSBI Atlas, publication due in 2020.

If able to help, or to join our recording team in the future, call BSBI:

Irish Officer:

Maria Long: (00 353 (0)87 2578763) maria.long@bsbi.org

BSBI Irish Regional Committee chair:

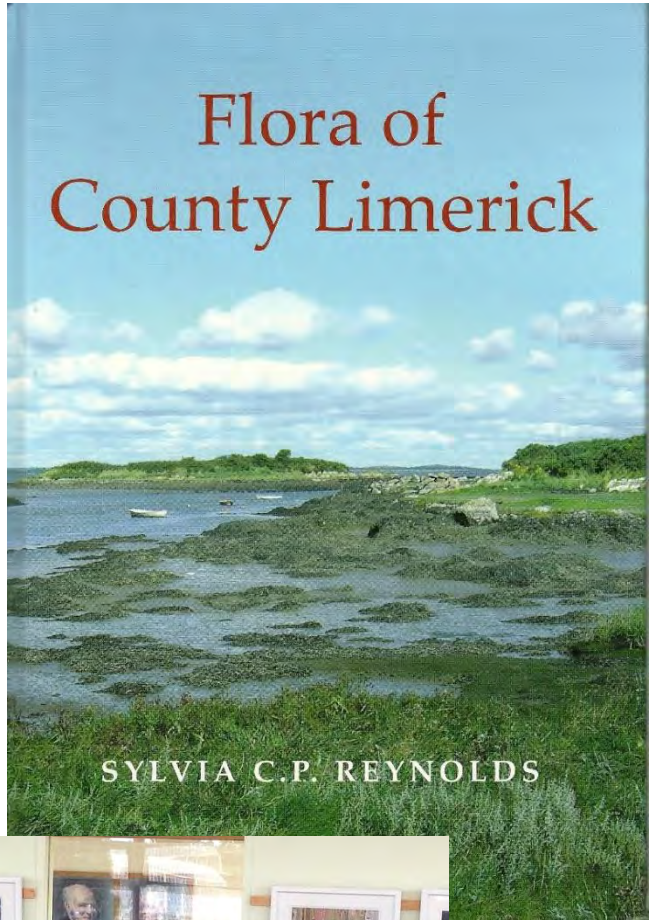
Gerry Sharkey: (00 353 (0)87 6202550) gsharkey@patodonnell.com



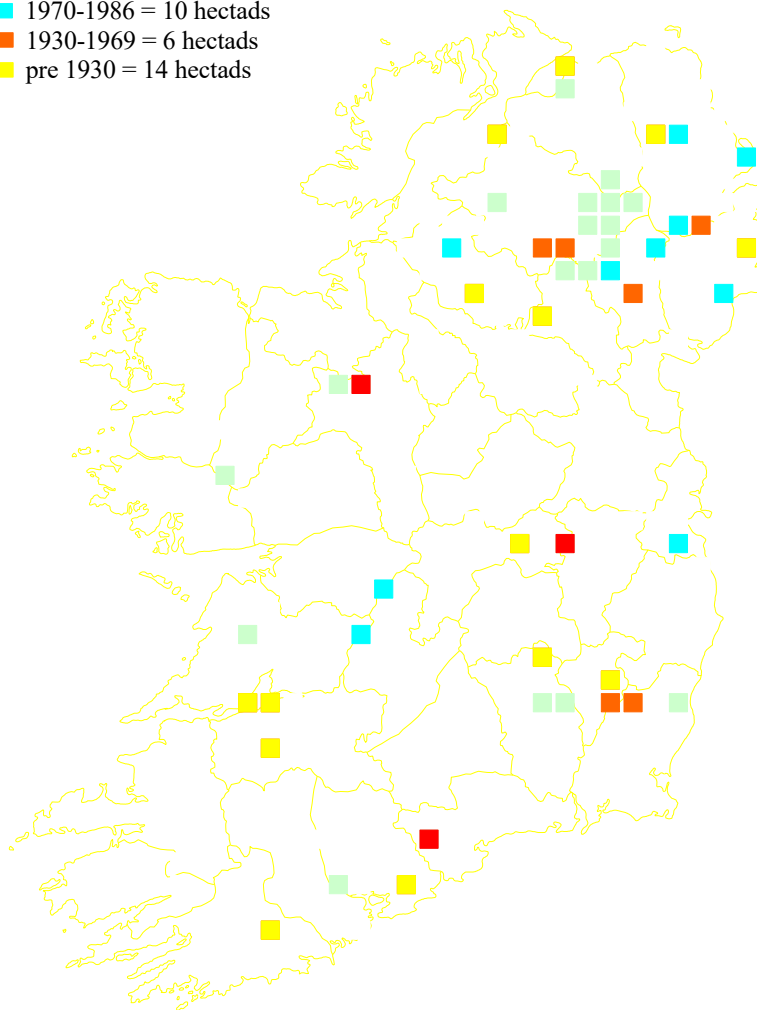
Left: *Epipactis palustris* (Marsh Helleborine). Middle: Ralph Sheppard & David McNeill. Right: Oisín Duffy & David McNeill. West Donegal field meeting. Photos: M. Long © 2013. See page 47.

Right: Front cover of *Flora of County Limerick*. See page 60.

Below: Julian and Sylvia Reynolds at the launch of the *Flora of County Limerick* at the National Botanic Gardens, 15 May 2013.



- post 2010 = 3 hectads
- 2000-2009 = 18 hectads
- 1987-1999 = 74 hectads
- 1970-1986 = 10 hectads
- 1930-1969 = 6 hectads
- pre 1930 = 14 hectads



Map of Ireland showing the distribution of *Lathraea squamaria* (Toothwort)
Near Lullymore IPPC Centre, Co. Kildare.

Photo: Zoë Devlin © 2010. See pages 5, 10 & 61.