

Keith Cunningham (1948 – 2014)

Keith was born and worked in the north-east of England, in Sunderland, where he trained as an electrician, then as a deep sea diver on the oil rigs.

He was a long serving conservation volunteer with the Durham Wildlife Trust, and was a trustee for six years as well. He contributed to the collection and ordering of data for the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan.

Keith joined the Natural History Society of Northumbria and regularly attended their meetings and the mid-week botany outings. On these field trips he met many other members of the BSBI, which he joined in 2008. He worked closely with the recorder for v.c.66, John Durkin. His willingness to help and his computer expertise came together to create a new botanical database for County Durham. He rescued a quarter of a million plant records from an out-of-date system and created the new basis for County

Durham's plant records. This has been used for the Botanical Society's Atlas project, the County Durham Rare Plant Register and for the species maps available on the North-East Flora website.

His recording work in Scotland with fellow member Christine Irvine led them to the discovery of a new site for the then-named *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* (Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid) ssp. *lapponica* in Glencoe, which was later confirmed by Professor Richard Bateman.

He was a keen photographer of plants and fungi and he produced spectacular pictures, which have been used in publications and on the websites of many conservation organisations. On field trips he was always the last of the group, as he was left behind composing shots.

ANNE PICKERING



Keith Cunningham at Glencoe Hidden Valley
Photo L. Hollingworth © 2009



Keith Cunningham
Photo L. Hollingworth © 2009



Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides ssp. *lapponica*
in Glencoe
Photo K. Cunningham © 2009



Keith Cunningham on the summit of Ben Lawers
Photo L. Hollingworth © 2009