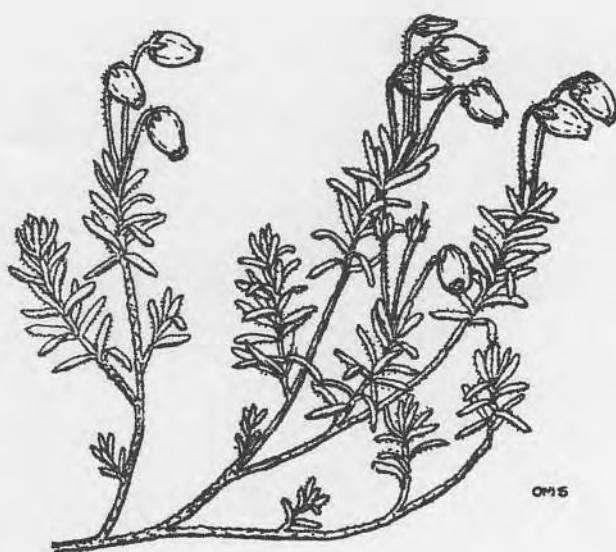


# B.S.B.I.

SCOTTISH  
NEWSLETTER



045

BSBI SCOTTISH NEWSLETTER

Number 3

Summer 1981

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## EDITORIAL

The Scottish Newsletter is distributed to BSBI members who are resident in Scotland and to those who, although not resident, are Recorders for a Scottish Vice County. In addition, complimentary copies go to the BSBI and BSE Office Bearers.

Other members of the BSBI are entitled to receive a copy provided they enclose an SAE with their request. Ten members took advantage of this and received Number 2.

In addition, we exchange Newsletters with our Welsh Counterparts. When he acknowledged our last issue, Mr Ellis, Honorary Secretary of the BSBI Committee for Wales, commented that we seemed to have less trouble in getting contributions than they did in Wales! We are certainly appreciative of those who have given us contributions, some of which arrive spontaneously, but the majority are received as the result of a direct request. We are again very grateful to Mrs Stewart for the cover illustration.

The BSBI Committee have recommended that the notice inviting nominations to the Committee for Scotland would more appropriately appear in the Scottish Newsletter than in the BSBI News. We take this as a vote of confidence in our publication!

Members will realise that their help is required to make this project a success and we sincerely hope that unsolicited contributions for Number 4 will reach one of us before the end of December, 1981.

A McG Stirling  
17 Austen Road  
Jordanhill  
GLASGOW G13 1SJ

P Macpherson  
15 Lubnaig Road  
GLASGOW G43 2RY

### CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

One of the issues your committee has been considering recently is how we might set about a drive to attract new members to the Society. There has been an increase in membership in Scotland during the last two years, which we hope may be an indication of a continuing trend. But, however this may be, there is no doubt that with a little effort it should be possible for us to increase our Scottish membership substantially. Advantages to us all would follow, especially in terms of increased viability of our publications and other activities. I believe that the running of the Society's affairs in Scotland (even allowing for my rather biased viewpoint) has been largely successful, and if it be true that 'nothing succeeds like success' we are probably moving in the right direction for an expanding membership. Nevertheless, I would like to ask everyone to help the process along a little by taking positive steps to recruit new members as appropriate opportunities occur. One new member each would not be an impossible target.

With the summer's botanising already upon us, may I wish all members an enjoyable and successful year. I hope that most of us will be able to meet at the Exhibition meeting and our AGM in Edinburgh on November 7th and will look forward to meeting old friends and, I hope, lots of new members on that occasion.

### ALLAN W. ROBSON

With the sudden death of Allan Robson in January, the Society lost one of its most devoted members. He joined the B.S.B.I. in 1947 and served for over 30 years as Recorder for the three vice-counties of East Perth, Mid Perth and West Perth. He also served on the CSSF. He was a very active field botanist, leading many excursions, and was instrumental in initiating and collating a great deal of plant recording work. Much of this was organised under the auspices of the Perthshire Society for Natural Science, of whose botanical section Allan was the leader until his death. He became a member of the PSNS Council in 1961 and edited the

Society's Proceedings and Transactions from 1966-76. He was especially concerned about conservation and was an active member of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, serving on the Perthshire Branch Committee and on the scientific sub-committee. He had a particular interest in the conservation of road verges and was actively involved, through the PSNS, with the 'rescues' of shingle vegetation on the Tay and of Helleborus foetidus on Moncrieff Hill in connection with new road construction. He was instrumental in conservation work at a Perthshire site for Linnaea borealis. He played an important part in botanical work at the Loch of the Lowes SWT Reserve and in the establishment of the Reserve at Balnaguard.

Allan was a practical field botanist who cared deeply about our flora. He was also concerned to impart his own enthusiasm for botany to others and he did this by organising meetings, arranging lectures and by writing many articles for the local press. A quiet, enthusiastic man, who was a delight to be with in the field, his death brought a deep sense of sadness and loss to all who knew him.

BSB

#### THE FIFE DERELICT LAND SURVEY

Dr. J. ROPER-LINDSAY

During the period autumn 1979 to autumn 1980 three ecologists carried out a survey of derelict land in Fife Region for the Scottish Wildlife Trust and the Regional Council. Over 400 sites were visited, ranging from small upland 19th century quarries and drift mine heaps obliterated by rough pasture, to old coal mine sites up to 100 ha in area. The survey provided valuable information on the distribution of various habitats in Fife and also shed interesting light on the presence of many of Fife's less common plants.

Many large pit bings still stand in the Region, providing an unstable substrate for colonisation. Apart from Chamaenerion angustifolium and Senecio viscosus, an early and highly successful colonist

appears to be Betula pubescens. Hundreds of seedlings grow directly on open soil; while many are checked by the advance of Agrostis stolonifera, Holcus lanatus or Deschampsia caespitosa, sufficient survive to form a dense birch scrub which spreads rapidly up the slopes of a bing or across dried-up slurry ponds. Beneath the birch, in some of the less disturbed situations, colonies of Pyrola minor seem able to develop quickly. At one old mine site it is accompanied by Corallorrhiza trifida which appeared in large numbers this summer (1980).

Dactylorhiza fuchsii and D. purpurella, with hybrids of a complete range of hues, are common in the more open spoil grassland. Conyza canadensis has spread across one site which has also provided a suitable habitat for naturalisation of a large colony of Iberis amara.

Echium vulgare is frequently found on bings far from the sea, while Spergularia rubra favours the lower slopes or areas of cinder or fine soil. These conditions are also found on many of the 240 km of disused railway lines in the Region. The clinker used in the construction of lines is rapidly invaded after uplift of the tracks by, predominantly, wind-borne seeds. Chaenorhinum minus was encountered frequently along open stretches of track, especially in the Kirkcaldy area; Hypericum humifusum, usually an upland species, was recorded at c. 300 ft above sea-level on old sidings outside Dunfermline, growing with fine specimens of Verbascum thapsus, a plant which thrives on Fife dereliction. Large stands of Reseda lutea and the more common R. luteola extend over disused coastal sidings in the same area as many spikes of Filago minima.

Some of the most exciting discoveries were in areas incorporated into derelict sites by accident. Adjacent to most large workings are other areas whose natural or semi-natural vegetation has been isolated and protected by presence of industry. Small portions of neutral grassland have often been left undisturbed beside railways or mine heaps. Here many new stations for Platanthera chlorantha were recorded, sometimes growing with Briza media, Sieglingia decumbens and Helictotrichon pubescens. Wetlands caused by mining

subsidence or blocked drainage have produced two new sites for Carex paniculata; C. acutiformis and C. aquatilis have been found frequently, often with Scirpus sylvaticus or Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani.

Quarries in Fife are generally of acidic rocks, and the vegetation there usually reflects that of the surroundings or of former times. Large clumps of Calluna vulgaris and Erica cinerea cling to upper ledges as remnants of former heath, especially in north east Fife. Typha latifolia and Eleocharis spp. invade any ponds which may form in the bottom.

The survey has indicated the resilience of plants spreading on to difficult and apparently toxic substrates. At Guardbridge the caustic waste from a paper mill supports a large stand of Filago minima and an attractive display of Dactylorhiza purpurella, while the bauxite waste heaps near Burntisland have been colonised by Senecio squalidus, Linaria vulgaris and, in wetter areas, by Carex disticha. It appears that, for many species, particularly those of wetlands, invasion of man's waste ground may be a means of survival when natural habitats are removed.

#### CALAMAGROSTIS IN SCOTLAND

OLGA M. STEWART

Calamagrostis species are widely distributed in Scotland, though decidedly rare. C. epigeios is the most frequent and appears to be mainly coastal in the west, but an inland plant in the east. C. canescens has been recorded from two localities in the lowlands - Kenmure Holms in Kirkcudbrightshire, where it has been known since 1883, and more recently from Selkirk. C. scotica is the only endemic species and grows in Caithness in a very limited area. C. stricta occurs in the lowlands in scattered localities from Ayrshire to Roxburghshire. The 'Atlas' shows one record each for Perth and Angus, and it is in the latter two areas that Calamagrostis has caused problems, sometimes being assigned to C. epigeios and at other times to C. canescens.

At the instigation of Miss E. Crackles, I have carried out some preliminary work on Calamagrostis from the Perth/Angus area, and the more one looks at these plants the more one realises that their measurements do not fit either C. epigeios or C. canescens, but correspond more closely to a north European species C. purpurea. Unfortunately this is a very variable species and a great deal more work will have to be done in comparing our Scottish plants with European material. Cytological investigation is particularly desirable.

The puzzling grasses have been studied from three sites in Perthshire, one in Angus and one at Braemar, Aberdeenshire. Last year (1980) specimens were again collected from Perthshire and Angus, but the Braemar plant, collected by E.C. Wallace and R. Mackie in 1941, could not be refound. Two characters, among others, which separate these plants from C. epigeios and C. canescens are the longer ligule (8-10 mm) and the number of stem nodes (average 6-7). If Calamagrostis with these two features should be found in other sites I would be grateful for specimens to examine. The basal shoots should be included. I would also like to see material of C. epigeios from Scottish sites, as this is also a variable species with a considerable difference in the length of awn. Specimens should be sent to me at 14 Church Hill, Edinburgh, EH10 4BQ.

CONGRATULATIONS to Elaine Bullard, BSBI vice-county Recorder for Orkney, who was awarded the MBE in the 1981 New Year Honours List for services to nature conservation. In addition to her BSBI activities, Elaine has for many years been active in Scottish Wildlife Trust affairs in Orkney, and frequently co-operates closely with the NCC in site investigational work in the islands.

## SCOTTISH VICE-COUNTY RECORDERS

As there have been a number of changes in vice-county Recorders during the past few years, members may like to have an up to date list for reference.

<u>VC 72, Dumfries</u>	Mrs M.E.R. Martin, Old Bank House, Lochmaben, Dumfriesshire, DG11 1PD
<u>VC 73, Kirkcudbright</u>	Mrs O.M. Stewart, 14 Church Hill, Edinburgh, EH10 4BQ
<u>VC 74, Wigtown</u>	Dr A.J. Silverside, Dept. of Biology, Paisley College of Technology, High Street, Paisley, Renfrewshire, PA1 2BE
<u>VC 75, Ayr</u>	B. Simpson, 9 Glenbryde Road, Seamill, West Kilbride, Ayrshire
<u>VC 76, Renfrew</u>	Miss E.R.T. Conacher, An Pharaid, Lawmarnock Road, Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire, PA11 3AP
<u>VC 77, Lanark</u>	Dr P. Macpherson, 15 Lubnaig Road, Newlands, Glasgow, G43 2RY
<u>VC 78, Peebles</u>	D.J. McCosh, 13 Cottesmore Gardens, London W8
<u>VC 79, Selkirk</u>	Dr R.W.M. Corner, Hawthorn Hill, 36 Wordsworth Street, Penrith, Cumbria
<u>VC 80, Roxburgh</u>	Dr R.W.M. Corner
<u>VC 81, Berwick</u>	M. Braithwaite, Haughton Castle, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 4AY
<u>VC 82, E. Lothian</u>	Miss E.H. Jackson, 41f Promenade, Musselburgh, Midlothian, EH21 6JU
<u>VC 83, Midlothian</u>	D. McKean, The Herbarium, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, EH3 5LR
<u>VC 84, W. Lothian</u>	M.M. Scott, 24 Gardner's Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 8DE
<u>VC 85, Fife</u>	G.H. Ballantyne, 193 Nicol Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife

<u>VC 86. Stirling</u>	Dr R.J. Keymer, Nature Conservancy Council, 12 Hope Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 2AS
<u>VC 87. West Perth</u>	R.E. Thomas, Orchil House, Braco, Dunblane, Perthshire, FK15 9LF
<u>VC 88. Mid Perth</u>	Vacant
<u>VC 89. East Perth</u>	Dr R.A.H. Smith, Nature Conservancy Council, 12 Hope Terrace, Edinburgh, EH9 2AS
<u>VC 90. Angus</u>	A.B. Ritchie, Dundee Museum, Albert Square, Dundee, DD1 1DA
<u>VC 91. Kincardine</u>	Mrs A.H. Somerville, The Herbarium, Dept. of Botany, The University, St. Machar Drive, Old Aberdeen, AB9 2UD
<u>VC 92. S. Aberdeen</u>	P. Marren, 3 Ewan Place, Banchory, Kincardineshire
<u>VC 93. N. Aberdeen</u>	Dr D. Welch, Nature Conservancy Council, Blackhall, Banchory, Kincardineshire
<u>VC 94. Banff</u>	Miss M. McCallum Webster, Rose Cottage, Dyke, by Forres, Morayshire, IV36 OTF
<u>VC 95. Moray</u>	Miss M. McCallum Webster
<u>VC 96. Easterness</u>	Mrs M. Barron, The Granary, Ness Side, Dores Road, Inverness, IV1 2DH
<u>VC 97. Westerness</u>	A.A.P. Slack, Morvern View, Kentallen, Appin, Argyll
<u>VC 98. Argyll</u>	P. Wormell, Hallival, Letterwalton, Ledaig, Connell, Argyll
<u>VC 99. Dunbarton</u>	A. McG. Stirling, 17 Austen Road, Jordanhill, Glasgow, G13 1SJ
<u>VC 100. Clyde Isles</u>	Mrs A.H. Somerville, The Herbarium, Dept. of Botany, The University, St. Machar Drive, Old Aberdeen, AB9 2UD

<u>VC 101, Kintyre</u>	A.G. Kenneth, Stronachullin, Ardrishaig, Argyll
<u>VC 102, S. Ebudes</u>	Miss C.W. Muirhead, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, EH3 5LR
<u>VC 103, M. Ebudes</u> <u>(Mull)</u>	Mrs J.W. Clark, Tigh Solais, Onich, Fort William, PH33 6SA
<u>(other isles)</u>	Miss Muirhead
<u>VC 104, N. Ebudes</u> <u>(Rhum)</u>	Dr J. Eggeling, Rumbling Bridge Cottage, Trochry, Dunkeld, Perthshire
<u>(Skye &amp; Raasay &amp; other isles)</u>	Mrs C.W. Murray, Prabost, Skeabost Bridge, Portree, Isle of Skye
<u>VC 105, West Ross</u>	D.M. Henderson, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, EH3 5LR
<u>VC 106, East Ross</u>	Dr U.K. Duncan, Parkhill, Arbroath, Angus, DD11 5RG
<u>VC 107, East Sutherland</u>	J.K. Butler, 15 Brims Road, Thurso, Caithness
<u>VC 108, West Sutherland</u>	Dr J. Rogers, Hill Farm Research Organisation, Bush Estate, Penicuik, Midlothian, EH26 0PM
<u>VC 109, Caithness</u>	Dr T.H. Keatinge, Nature Conservancy Council, Oldbank Road, Golspie, Sutherland
<u>VC 110, Outer Hebrides</u>	Miss M.S. Campbell, Casa Rossa, Menton-Garavan, Alpes-Maritimes, France
<u>VC 111, Orkney</u>	Miss E.R. Bullard, Toftwood, Kirkwall, Orkney
<u>VC 112, Shetland</u>	W. Scott, Easterhoull, Scalloway, Shetland

## "THE BOTANIST IN SKYE"

The first edition of this check-list of the plants of Skye and Raasay was produced locally in 1974. By 1978 the 500-odd duplicated copies were almost sold out, and the BSBI offered to see a second, printed, edition through the press and share part of the costs.

As well as bringing the 10km square records up to date (end of 1979), the actual squares in which a plant has been recorded are now given, allowing visiting botanists to check whether they have found, if not a new plant, perhaps a new locality. Proof that interesting records can still be made can be seen from two sets of additions since 1974. The first set includes the hybrid Equisetum x trachyodon, a rare plant in Scotland, which was found (1974) before a definite locality had been found in Skye (1978) for one of the 'parents' - Equisetum variegatum, Pyrula minor (1975) and Orthilia secunda (1978) were previously only known from Raasay. No less than seven plants were re-instated from the 'omitted' (=doubtful) records, but three of these, Lycopodiella inundata, Ranunculus auricomus, and Moehringia trinervia, turned up in quite different localities to those given in the old records.

'A Botanist's Guide' has been replaced by two chapters on the vegetation communities of Skye and of Raasay, by Dr J.H.B. Birks of the University of Cambridge, who contributed, while working on his Ph.D. thesis on the vegetational history of the island, many of the new records (including several 'firsts') made in the last 15 years. R.M. Murray has written brief notes on Geology, Landforms and Climate, with an up-to-date climate table. The planted trees and Forestry Commission introductions have been removed from the main list to an appendix (a good few additions could still be made here). New maps have been drawn for District and place names, Relief, Geology, and Species totals for each 10km square.

The smaller size ( $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ ins), and the use of both sides of a page, makes the new edition much handier to carry around. It can be obtained (price £2) as detailed on the blue slip sent out to BSBI members with

the 'Christmas mail', or from booksellers in the main Scottish towns.

#### A 19th CENTURY BOTANIST'S IMPEDIMENTA

When planning a botanical excursion or holiday do you make a check list of the items considered essential to the success and comfort of your trip? The celebrated Professor John Hutton Balfour evidently did, and the following formidable list of over 50 items was his considered requirement for 'a Highland Trip of 14 days' :

Complete change of clothing (in case of wet); a light suit; stout shoes with nails (two pairs); leggings; slippers; garters; 6 pairs worsted socks; light oil-cloth coat (easily carried); alpine pole; whistle; compass with clinometer; scissors; veil for midges; towel and soap; map of the country; wide-awake hat; two reams of drying paper (at least); 4 outside boards; 8 to 10 inside boards; field book; lens; spade; knife; strong twine for hanging paper to dry; measure and tallies for plants; botanical book; small box for mosses; hamper for roots; lucifers and tapers; essence of coffee; packing needle; air cushion; oil cloth; opera glass; ropes; flask; small microscope; materials for mending clothes; forceps; common medicines; travelling cap; surgical case; paper; pens; ink; writing paper; postage stamps; hammer and nails; aneroid barometer for heights.

#### THE EARLIEST BOTANICAL LIST FROM THE WEST OF SCOTLAND?

JAMES H. DICKSON

Readers can readily imagine my pleasure in being shown a list of plants for the Isle of Bute made in the year 1768, nine years before Lightfoot's *Flora Scotica*. This happy event occurred because I lectured to the hospitable Buteshire Natural History Society. The list is in the form of a letter from Professor John Hope of Edinburgh to the 3rd Earl of Bute. It runs to about 430 species, mostly vascular plants but also bryophytes, lichens and algae. The list was compiled in the course of a short visit by James Robertson who worked under Professor Hope. One is left admiring Robertson and Hope

who had compiled a list of plants in the Edinburgh area, just as Sibbald had done in the late 17th century.

The list is in the process of detailed study, but there is little that is disputable in the light of the then state of botanical knowledge. They used Hudson's *Flora Anglica*, the most up-to-date summary of the British flora. Readers can again imagine my pleasure in finding that my departmental library houses a copy of Hudson with Hope's book plate and annotations. Probably it is the very book used to make the list. Robertson recorded *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, *Leucorchis albida*, *Polygonum viviparum* and *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*, amongst others now not known in Bute. Could they still be present? Does anybody know what is *Valeriana peregrina*? This is a name not used by Hudson, Linnaeus or Ray.

It is hoped that a detailed publication will soon follow.

Botany Department,  
The University of Glasgow

#### REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Mrs J.W. Clark, Tigh Solais, Onich, by Fort William, PH33 6SA, is interested in the Gaelic names of plants, and would like to hear from anyone with information on the subject, especially references to literature.

A.McG. Stirling would like to hear of any observations on flowering dates of Holy Grass (*Hierochloe borealis*). At the Renfrewshire station young panicles were noted on 31st March this year (1981).

Sandy Payne, 8 Esslemont Avenue, Aberdeen, is investigating the present status of *Sagina intermedia* in Scotland and would be pleased to hear from botanists who have seen the plant. Details of site, altitude, habitat, associates, relative abundance, etc. would be particularly welcome.

Members are reminded that, when corresponding with the Society's Recorders, a stamped addressed envelope should be included for the reply.

As this Bill is passing through Parliament at the moment, and I have produced the required quinquennial review on nationally rare species, I thought that members would like to know the current situation.

Scottish species previously scheduled in 1975 were:

Cicerbita alpina  
Diapensia lapponica  
Gentiana nivalis  
Phyllodoce caerulea  
Saxifraga cernua  
S cespitosa  
Woodsia alpina  
W ilvensis

On Schedule 7 of the new Bill at present being debated, are 6 additional species found in Scotland:

Arenaria norvegica  
Cystopteris dickieana  
Lychnis alpina  
Polygonatum verticillatum  
Potentilla rupestris  
Rhinanthus serotinus

These are nationally rare species listed in the Red Data Book (2nd edition in press), and stated to be either endangered or vulnerable.

There was some discussion on the inclusion of Primula scotica, but it was decided not to schedule it, as it did not come into the category of nationally rare plants, and a fairly recent survey had shown that many populations were healthy and not declining. But this species is an endemic and as such will be considered in another review by myself later this year.

If members have any views on species which they think could be considered for scheduling, I will be pleased to hear from them, at N.C.C., Huntingdon.

## SCOTTISH EXHIBITION MEETING 1980

P. Macpherson

A meeting organised by the BSBI Committee for Scotland in conjunction with the Botanical Society of Edinburgh and Glasgow Natural History Society was held in the College of Technology, Glasgow, on 1st November, 1980.

A meeting of Scottish Recorders was held at 11.30 hours. Twenty attended and the meeting was addressed by Mr Derek Wells of the Nature Conservancy Council, who is co-ordinating the Vice County Recorder Network.

An Exhibition was open from 1200 to 1800 hours. A list of Exhibitors will appear in Watsonia.

During the afternoon the Annual General Meeting of the BSBI Scottish Members was held with an attendance of forty one. Reports were given and the retiring members re-elected to the Committee.

At 16.30 hours, with the President of the Glasgow Natural History Society in the chair, an audience of seventy nine heard Dr O.L. Gilbert, Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Sheffield, give a talk entitled "Plant Ecology of some Remote Scottish Islands". A vote of thanks was given by A.McG. Stirling.

A buffet supper was held in the North British Hotel, after which colour transparencies were presented by B.S. Brookes, J. Lyth, P. Macpherson, E. Pilling, J.G. Roger, J. Roper-Lindsay, A.A. Slack, A.McG. Stirling.

## ADMINISTRATION

### BSBI COMMITTEE FOR SCOTLAND

At the Annual Meeting on November 7th, 1981, four members will be elected to the Committee. The retiring members are B.S. Brookes, Mrs C.W. Murray, A.J. Silverside and Mrs O.M. Stewart. All are eligible for re-election. Nominations, signed by two members of the Society normally resident in Scotland or who are recorders for a vice-county in Scotland though not resident, and with the written consent of the candidate who must also qualify as above, should reach the undersigned at 15 Lubnaig Road, Glasgow, G43 3RY by October 10th, 1981.

Peter Macpherson,  
Hon. Secretary,  
Committee for Scotland

STOP PRESS. . . . .

We are delighted to learn of the award of an MBE to Mary Briggs, the Society's Honorary General Secretary, in the Queen's Birthday Honours. We congratulate her on the award which recognises the immense amount of time and effort she gives unstintingly to our Society and its affairs.