

Anglesey Plants in 2017

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This year has seen changes in the Recordship with Hugh Knott retiring as Joint Recorder, but continuing as a field recorder and Nigel Brown welcomed back in his place.

2017 started with the New Year Plant Hunt, which included finding *Geranium columbinum* (Long-stalked Crane's-bill) in flower on the coast, just west of Aberffraw.

Confirmation was received from Ian Denholm & Richard Bateman of the June 2016 record of the hybrid between *Dactylorhiza purpurella* (Northern Marsh-orchid) and *Dactylorhiza traunsteineroides* (Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid) on Cors Bodeilio NNR, SH5000.7755 by Nigel Brown. The single flowering plant was growing with both parents in a calcareous mire. This is a scarce hybrid, indeed this would appear to be the first confirmed record from Wales (Stace *et al.* 2015).

Also carried forward from 2016 was the inputting of several thousand additional monad records, mainly collected by Debbie Evans, who has contributed a truly formidable number of records to the data-base.

Another significant block of data came from Martyn Stead with his 2016/17 winter survey of *Polypodium* (Polypody), collecting some 650 specimens which he determined as follows:

Polypodium interjectum : 414 (62%), *Polypodium vulgare* : 178 (27%) *Polypodium cambricum* : 4 (0.6%) *Polypodium vulgare* x *P. interjectum* = *P. x mantoniae* : 63 (9.5%) *Polypodium vulgare* x *P. cambricum* = *P. font-queri* : 1 (0.15%) and *Polypodium interjectum* x *P. cambricum* = *P. shivasiae* : 1 (0.15%). Of particular interest were the 63 records of the hybrid *P. x mantoniae*, confirming RH Robert's view that, though easily overlooked, this was a common plant along roadside banks across the island.

Several visits have been to update details of some of the rarer and scarcer Anglesey species, especially those not seen since before 2000. Amongst these in April *Ranunculus tripartitus* (Three-lobed Crowfoot) was reconfirmed on the wet section of the coastal path near Rhoscolyn, SH26.75; at Tre Wilmot SSSI, Holyhead, SH22.81 and Salbri Bog SSSI, SH37.88 - all quite healthy populations; but at nearby Llyn Hafodol SSSI, SH39.88, only 1-2 plants were noted - probably due to the lack of the usual cattle trampled mud.

Still in April six plants of *Helleborus viridis* (Green Hellebore) were counted in the woods at Porthamel NWWT Reserve, SH50.68, at what is now its only Anglesey location.

Ranunculus auricomus (Goldilocks) was also still scattered through the small wood by the shore of the Menai Strait at Moel y Don, SH51.67 and along the mound at Lleiniog Castle, SH61.79, but could not be refound in the nearby woods by the Afon Lleiniog in Llangoed, the area now dominated by *Allium ursinum* (Ramsons) and *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* ssp. *argentatum* (Garden Yellow Archangel). The best population is still along the verge of the minor road from Cichle to Glan-yr-afon, SH598.793.

A visit to Fedwr Fawr refound the tiny population of *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting) in SH60.82, about 50 inflorescences in an area of 40 x 20 sq. cm., but the small population on the National Trust's nearby Bryn Offa site, SH57.91, appeared to have been destroyed by

gorse removal, despite the site being well known to the Trust and visited by two of their staff in 2012.

Encouragingly at Fedwr Fawr about 36 stems of *Huperzia selago* (Fir Clubmoss) were counted in a 10m x 10m. block of heathland, more than had been seen for many years – however it is easily overlooked and this visit benefited from many pairs of eyes during a Flora Group visit. Apart from a small population on Mynydd Bodafon Fir Clubmoss has disappeared from all its other Anglesey localities. Later in the year at Fedwr Fawr some 30 plants of *Selaginella selaginoides* (Lesser Clubmoss) were counted on the wet heath, the last record from here was in 1961 – this was the last date here too for *Drosera rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Sundew), but this was not refound.

Both species were found later in September at Cors Goch Nature Reserve during a field meeting with members of the Wildflower Society, as part of their AGM in Llandudno.

On nearby Bwrydd Arthur SH58.81 *Helianthemum oelandicum* (Hoary Rockrose) was just coming into flower in early May on the south facing limestone outcrops, though invading Ivy and scrub will threaten the site unless further management is undertaken fairly soon. Also seen were *Avenula pratensis* (Meadow Oat-grass) at what is probably its only Anglesey location and *Arabis hirsuta*, (Hairy Rock-cress) a plant that has declined markedly in recent years.

In early June a Flora Group visit to the limestone just west of the NWWT Mariandrys reserve refound the small population of *Potentilla neumanniana* (Spring Cinquefoil) at its only Anglesey locality in SH59.80 and intermixed with it about 20 plants of *Trifolium scabrum* (Rough Clover), the first record from the E side of Anglesey.

Continuing the search for plants with no post2000 record Jane and Ivor Rees refound *Calystegia soldanella* (Sea Bindweed) in small quantity in dunes at Glan Halen, near Llanddona, at the E end of Red Wharf Bay, the first record from this coast since 1970, and more excitingly, still on the E coast, in the small area of dune at Traeth Lligwy, Moelfre, SH49.87 – a new hectad record. Also in the dune at Lligwy was a single plant of *Eryngium maritimum* (Sea Holly) – another reconfirmation of a pre2000 record. In late June a large population of *Euphrasia officinalis* ssp *anglica* (English Eyebright) was found on Newborough Warren straddling SH41.64 & 42.64 close to the path from Llyn Rhos-ddu to the sea shore, the first confirmed record from Anglesey since 1956.

Publication in 2017 of the new BSBI Handbook on Violas has stimulated some new records. Several *Viola odorata* (Sweet Violet) clumps were determined to varietal level with both var. *dumetorum* and var. *imberbis* being noted. In the past there has been a reluctance to record the hybrid between *Viola riviniana* (Common Dog-violet) and *Viola reichenbachiana* (Early Dog-violet) because of the variability of the parents, but stimulated by the new book records of *Viola x bavarica* have been forthcoming this year. More significantly *Viola x scabra*, the hybrid between *Viola odorata* (Sweet Violet) and *Viola hirta* (Hairy Violet) was found by Jane & Ivor Rees near Llanidan in SH49.65. It was confirmed by both Michael Foley & Michael Porter and as well as a new VCR, may well be the first post2000 Welsh record.

Staying with violets - Ivor Rees has sent in two pictures of the results of heathland management on the RSPB's Penrhosfeilw Common reserve, near South Stack, Holyhead. The first from March 2015 shows a recent, rather drastic looking, scrub cleared area being viewed by Peter Marren, James Robertson & Ian Bonner, the second in May 2017 demonstrates the benefit – a healthy growth of *Viola lactea* (Pale Heath-violet).

A colony of *Allium ampeloprasum* var *ampeloprasum* (Wild Leek) has been known from the roadside at Ty Mawr, SH21.81 on Holy Island since at least 1970; but in 2017 a single flower spike of a Wild Leek found by J & I Rees amongst bramble and bracken near PorthTywyn-mawr, Llanfwrog, SH290.849 has been confirmed by Paul Green as the endemic *A. ampeloprasum* var. *babingtonii* – a first county record.

A surprise find on a Flora Group visit to the coast near Llandonna was a plant of Juniper, thought to be *Juniperus communis* ssp *communis* but a horticultural form. The only other Anglesey records are from Holyhead Mountain, though it does grow only some 12km away on the Great Orme.

An exciting Stonewort find by Tristan Hatton-Ellis of NRW was *Lamprothamnium papulosum* (Foxtail Stonewort) growing in the Inland Sea, just N of Four Mile Bridge, in shallow water with *Zostera noltei* and *Ruppia*, probably a 1st Welsh Record.

An end of season rediscovery by James Robertson was of *Hypericum hirsutum* (Hairy St John's-wort) in a limestone field wall at the Cors Goch NWWT reserve, SH50.81. It had been noted in 2010 on limestone rocks in the grounds of Cae Trefor, Tynyngogl, SH50.82, where it was inclined to spread and had probably been present for several years. Otherwise this was a plant only recorded on limestone ledges in a former quarry at Brynsiencyn, SH49.67 by RH Roberts in 1973 and thought to be lost due to quarry infilling.

Dactylorhiza praetermissa (Southern Marsh-orchid) was first confirmed in the vice-county at Plas Newydd in 2013 during the BSBI AGM. It has taken until 2017 for the second record - from Plas Cadnant, Menai Bridge, SH55.73, a single spike in the woodland garden, found by Nigel Brown.

Another orchid of interest was *x Dactyloдения st-quintinii*, the intergeneric hybrid between *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted-orchid) and *Gymnadenia borealis* (Heath Fragrant-orchid) found and determined by David Nelson at the foot of the limestone scarp on Cors Goch, SH50.81 in June. The only other recent record was from Cors Erddreiniog in 2002.

A hybrid new to Anglesey was *Galeopsis x ludwigii* the cross between *G. bifida* (Bifid Hemp-nettle) x *G. tetrahit* (Common Hemp-nettle) just a single plant, on a gravelly trackside near Cefni Reservoir, Llangefni, found by Nigel Brown.

Among new neophyte taxa were *Allium roseum* (Rosy Garlic) a clump by the coastal path, Red Wharf Bay, SH530.814, 2016 and a clump by the B5110 between Brynteg and Llangefni, SH476.783, 2017, both found by Nigel Brown. Also *Cyrtomium fortunei* (Fortune's Holly-fern) established in the forestry plantation to the SE of Mynydd Bodafon, SH47.84, Hugh Knott and *Eleagnus x submacrophylla* (Oleaster) *E. macrophylla* x *E. pungens*, Lleiniog, SH62.79, Nigel Brown, planted just above the shoreline.

Day lilies have been noted along the shoreline of Llyn Llywenan, SH34.82 before, but this year Debbie Evans determined them as *Hemerocallis lilioasphodelus* (Yellow Day-lily). Other Day-lily records have been of *H. fulva* (Orange Day-lily).

Frankenia laevis (Sea-heath) has been known on the silty/sandy shore of the Crigyll Estuary, Rhosneigr, since 1965 and has spread locally to occur in parts of 4 monads. However this year Chris Metherell has reported finding it at Newborough, SH39.63.

All the records received so far are in the BSBI database and in late November the BSBI has issued maps at monad and tetrad level to show progress towards Atlas 2020 for each vice-county. The Anglesey priority over the remaining two years of the Atlas project will be to

refind native taxa that have not yet been recorded since before 2000 and to progress the validation of records in the Distribution Database (DDb). We will also continue to welcome any records at the monad level, especially for the scarcer taxa in the Rare Plant Register

More photographs of the Anglesey flora can be seen on Hugh Knott's website "A Flora of Anglesey" www.cambriaflora.net.

Thanks are due as always to all those who have supplied records in 2017 and especially to Nigel Brown for organising eight meetings of the Flora Group and to the Group members for their help in compiling this note,

References

Stace, C.A., Preston, C.D. & Pearman, D.A., 2015. *Hybrid Flora of the British Isles*, BSBI, Bristol.

Porter, M. & Foley, M., 2017. *Violas of Britain and Ireland*, BSBI, Bristol.