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The following is the Committee as elected at the Annual General Meeting at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin on 18 August 2012. Office bears were subsequently elected at the first committee meeting. The Committee is now:

Mr G. Sharkey (Chairman and interim Hon. Treasurer)  
Dr J.S. Faulkner (Vice-Chairman and Field Secretary)  
Mrs F. Devery (Hon. Secretary)  
Mr P.R. Green (Hon. Editor – *Irish Botanical News*)  
Mr R.H. Northridge (NI Representative to Records Committee)  
Dr D. Doogue  
Dr M. Sheehy-Skeffington

The following is a co-opted member of the committee:

Dr E.C. Mhic Daeid (ROI Representative to Records Committee)

The following are nominated observers to the committee:

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

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Front cover photo: *Sorbus anglica* (English Whitebeam), Governor's Rock, Ross Island, Co. Kerry. Photo: T.C.G. Rich/National Museum Wales © 2007. See page 11.

Inside cover photos: 1 – Rose Hurley, cutting rhubarb pie & 2 – recording on Saltee Island Little, Co. Wexford. Photos: 1 – P.R. Green & 2 – J. Hurley © 2012. See page 54. 3 – BSBI field meeting at Hook Head, Co. Wexford. Photo: P.R. Green © 2012. See page 63. 4 – *Ligusticum scoticum* (Scots Lovage), 5 – *Mertensia maritima* (Oysterplant), 6 - Loughaltachuile - BSBI field meeting on Rathlin Island. Photos: John Street © 2012. See page 58.

All species and common names in *Irish Botanical News* follow those in the database on the BSBI website <http://rbg-web2.rbge.org.uk/BSBI/> and Stace, C. (2010). *New Flora of the British Isles*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Cambridge University, Cambridge.

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## Guest Editorial

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

In medicine, recognising the value of a second opinion is a sign of strength. This must surely be as true of plant identification as it is of the diagnosis of medical conditions. Why, then, are we sometimes so reluctant to look for one?

In his address at the launch of the Flora of Fermanagh in November 2012, Ralph Forbes expressed his frustration over the practice among some botanists of recording rare or difficult species without the support of a voucher specimen, a photo, or an expert determination. The outcome is that others cannot tell how much credence to place on these records. A never-ending debate may ensue about whether to recognise the record, whether to leave it in place and mark it as unconfirmed, or whether to delete it altogether. Down the line, unconfirmed and doubtful records create vastly more work than valid ones!

I have to confess that I am as capable of guilt in this respect as anyone. I know that some botanical colleagues are more systematic and thorough, but a few of you may recognise the following scenario. You pore over specimens until the wee small hours. Eventually you're getting tired, and you provisionally record the most likely options, and say to yourself that you'll send them off to the relevant BSBI referee tomorrow. Tomorrow comes and goes. The specimens sort themselves into those that deteriorate beyond recognition, those that get lost, and a few that survive until "tomorrow" finally arrives.

Since November, I have been scrutinising the CEDaR database for, among other things, interesting recent records from within my vice-county. Doing so has reassured me that I am probably not a culprit-in-chief. What it has shown me, however, is that Ralph's concern is well founded. There are too many recent records "in the system" that would be very interesting indeed if correct, but which are not sufficiently supported to be convincing. In many cases there is not even so much as a brief comment showing that the recorder realised the record was interesting, which is in itself something of a pointer towards an error.

Our predecessors from long ago had no modern identification guides and equipment, nor digital databases and cameras, nor the excellent BSBI Referee system. They might be forgiven for occasional laxities, but today's botanists have no such excuses. We can, and must, do better or encourage others to do better.

One source of these poorly documented records is botanical surveys done on contract to conservation bodies. Some of the surveyors may be relatively inexperienced or unfamiliar with the Irish flora. So part of the remedy may lie with the commissioning bodies ensuring that their contractors are properly trained and briefed, and have back-up support. In particular, they need to be up to scratch in recognising when a second opinion is necessary, how to get it, and how to report confirmed records to Vice-county Recorders.

But before we cast all our stones in the direction of the unfortunate contractors, we do need to examine our own practices too. My personal resolutions for 2013 are to buy a small digital camera for use when recording, and to use the BSBI referee system as judiciously as possible.

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### **BSBI Irish Officer – Maria Long**

As many of you will know, I (see photo on page 75) have recently been appointed BSBI Irish Officer. I took up the post on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012, so by the time you read this I will have had a few months in the position. I am based at the National Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin, Dublin, and will work two days a week for the BSBI over the next two years.

Before taking up the position I knew about half of the Irish VCRs, and since then I have met many more. But for those of you who don't know me well, I have been a member of the BSBI since 2006, and have worked in the field of ecology since 2001. I have a degree in Zoology (1999; Univ. College Cork), a masters in Conservation and Management (2001; NUI Galway), and a PhD in Ecology (2011; Botany Department, Trinity College Dublin). I have worked extensively in ecological and plant surveys, on projects such as the National Survey of Native Woodlands, the Irish Semi-Natural Grasslands Survey, and indeed the fieldwork for my PhD. I love teaching, and am well-experienced. I am an occasional lecturer in Trinity College Dublin and have led numerous outings on many aspects of natural history. My other main interest is land snails!

The position of 'Irish Officer' was created in order to provide support to the network of volunteer BSBI recorders, the VCRs (Vice-county Recorders). The equivalent posts in Scotland and Wales have resulted in a significant improvement in the functioning of the BSBI recording network, and the plan is that we can achieve similar results here! Communication and support will be at the core of this position, and I hope to have fruitful dealings with all VCRs over the coming years. There is a Steering Committee for the position, and they set the agenda and priorities through ratifying my work

plans. There are three members: BSBI Plant Unit representative (Kevin Walker and/or Jim McIntosh); Chair of BSBI Committee for Ireland (Gerry Sharkey); Vice-Chair of BSBI Committee for Ireland (John Faulkner). The Irish Officer, and the Steering Group, make regular reports to the BSBI Committee for Ireland.

I have already made initial contact with all VCRs (mostly by e-mail, but some by post), and have had replies from most. Over the coming weeks and months I plan to speak with all VCRs directly, either on the telephone or in person. I will aim to get to know those that I don't already know (only a few!), to see how everyone is getting on with recording, to assess what are the most pressing support needs, etc. Based on this, I will formulate a plan designed at providing the support which is needed in the most effective and efficient way.

I envisage encouraging the setting up of 'regional' groups (where there is interest in this). These would be very informal, but be a way of VCRs sharing expertise and experiences. Also, with just two days a week, my opportunities to visit all VCRs individually in their own area will be limited, so I hope that group/regional meetings will help alleviate this. I also hope to run/facilitate a number of workshops on common themes/issues - e.g. the use of MapMate and the DDB (the BSBI 'big database').

In summary, I will first assess what support is needed where. I will then begin to focus on helping with individual recording strategies, supporting / encouraging the digitisation of data, and also, supporting/encouraging the submission of data. I should also mention that I plan to take every opportunity I can to raise the profile of the BSBI in Ireland. This will hopefully generate some interest, some more members, and maybe some more records!

### **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.

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## **Introduction from newly appointed Vice-county Recorders**

### **Carlow (H13)**

Lisa Dowling, *5 Friars Lough, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow*

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Lisa Dowling is married, a mother of two young children, and currently working as a freelance ecologist, mainly in Carlow and surrounding counties. With a background in ecology and environmental sciences, she first joined the Dublin Naturalist' Field Club meetings in the late 90s where she began to develop her botanical skills. A post-experience certificate in biological recording and species identification undertaken during 2005 and 2006 with the University of Birmingham allowed her to hone in on some of the more difficult plant groups. During this period she worked for a number of environmental consultancies in Dublin. A member of the BSBI since 2007, she is delighted to be appointed the new Vice-county Recorder for Carlow, the county in which she was born and bred, and which, very conveniently for recording purposes she now lives. She is very much looking forward to exploring the flora in Carlow in greater detail and expanding her knowledge and interest over the coming years.

### **Laois (H14)**

Fiona MacGowan & Mark McCorry

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Botany brought Fiona MacGowan and Mark McCorry together as they studied at the Department of Botany in UCD. They were married in 2001, just after Fiona got her PhD and just before Mark got his! Fiona's speciality is peatland vegetation types although her ecological consultancy work over the years has covered a broad spectrum of Irish habitat types from woodland to agricultural to coastal. She has been a member of the BSBI for over twenty years and served on the Committee for Ireland during her postgraduate days. She has been privileged to meet with some of Ireland's botanical legends at various BSBI meetings and learnt a huge amount through the practical hands-on advice that BSBI members so readily share.

Originally from Co. Antrim, Mark began to develop an interest in botany after being dragged (willingly) over bogs and mountains by Fiona. He found membership of the Society greatly complimented and enhanced the



botanical field-skills he was learning at University. Mark's PhD studies on Saltmarsh ecology led to work with the NPWS carrying out a major survey of many saltmarsh sites in the Republic of Ireland. His work then moved inland working on surveys of many other habitat types and in 2009 he joined Bord na Móna's Ecology team at their offices beside the beautiful Lough Boora Parklands in Co. Offaly. He is still developing this botanical expertise and enjoys finding new species and trying to remember old ones.

Fiona and Mark moved to County Laois in 2003. Both are 'blow-ins' to the county but their botanical wanderings over the last decade have meant they've got to know this small but beautifully formed county very well! There is a wide diversity of habitats to explore from the blanket bogs and heaths of the Slieve Blooms to the alluvial Oak woodlands of the river Nore and the Hazel woodlands of the limestone hills. Fiona works as a scientific advisor to the Abbeyleix Bog project – a raised bog site leased from Bord na Móna by the local community. The site hosts a variety of habitats of great botanical interest and Fiona and Mark together with their daughters Órla and Hannah (see photo on page 75) look forward to hosting fellow BSBI members on trips to visit all the above-mentioned interesting Laois habitats in the years to come.

### **North-East Galway (H17)**

Chris Peppiatt, *101 Friar's Hill, Bishop O'Donnell Rd, Galway City*  
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Chris is a Bristol Botany graduate (late 80's) who came to live in Galway in 2000.

Chris has worked at NUI Galway, later as an ecologist for an environmental consultancy and is now a self-employed ecologist. His interests stretch to all vascular plant groups (as well as to virtually anything else that is alive), although he does have a reputation as a bit of an orchid tart and is also interested in aquatics.

### **Louth (H31)**

Melinda Lyons, *38 Marion Green, Marino, Dublin 3*  
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Irish vegetation, ecology and landscape have always intrigued me and I first joined the BSBI in the early 1990's while studying Botany in Trinity College, Dublin. I returned to TCD in 2010 to begin work on a PhD project entitled 'The Flora and Conservation Status of Petrifying Springs in Ireland' under

the supervision of Dr Daniel Kelly. This entails investigating the species composition and environmental conditions in lime-rich springs throughout Ireland, funded by National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Irish Research Council.

I am a Board Member of Dublin Naturalists' Field Club where I am actively involved in leading outings.

I look forward to working on the flora of Louth and wish to convey my thanks to Dónal Synnott for his work over the years and for helping me to embark on this new project.

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### **Distinguished Recorder Award 2012**

Congratulations to Don Cotton our Vice-county Recorder for Sligo (**H28**) on receiving the Distinguished Recorder Award 2012 from the National Biodiversity Data Centre, Waterford at a special ceremony in Dublin on 22 November 2012. This award is for the outstanding contribution he has made to the recording of biological diversity in Ireland for almost 40 years. To read more about Don Cotton's achievements go to the link at: <http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/distinguished-recorder-2012/>

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### **Estate Trees**

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

The former Godfery Estate consisting of over 150 acres is situated north and west of the village of Milltown Co. Kerry (**H2**).

This is prime land and embrace three cemeteries, two of which are no longer in use. The Godfery's were the local landlords and lived in the 'Big House' now long gone. The lands were purchased by the then land commission in the early sixties and divided among local farmers. Typical of the many such estate's throughout the country there are fine examples of a wide variety of ancient trees.

A prime candidate would be the *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash) tree in the Whitechurch (which incidentally house the Godfery tomb). It is well over 30m tall with a bole girth of 4.5m at 1.5m. Not far from it is a very old *Abies alba* (European Silver-fir). Of similar vintage throughout the estate are fine specimens of *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech), *Tilia x europaea* (Lime), *Quercus petraea* (Sessile Oak), *Acer pseudoplatanus* (Sycamore) and the regal *Aesculus hippocastanum* (Horse Chestnut).

There are just a few *Ulmus glabra* (Wych Elm) survivors from the Dutch Elm Disease of the sixties. There is an eye catching *Quercus ilex* (Holm Oak) in a field to the south of the estate.

These are the lasting botanical remnants of a bygone era.

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### **The genus *Sorbus* in the Killarney area, Co. Kerry, Ireland**

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MK17 0QH, England*

R. Hodd, *Coolies, Muckross, Co. Kerry, Ireland*

M. B. Wyse Jackson, *National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of  
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2, Ireland*

### **Introduction**

The Killarney National Park, Co. Kerry is the most important area for Whitebeams (*Sorbus* L., Rosaceae) in Ireland (Rich *et al.*, 2010). It has long been known as the only site in Ireland for *Sorbus anglica* (English Whitebeam), and as one of the relatively few Irish sites of *S. rupicola* (Rock Whitebeam) (Praeger, 1934a, b; Scully, 1916). The newly described *S. scannelliana* (Scannell's Whitebeam) is endemic to the park with a very small population (Rich & Proctor, 2009). Records for *S. hibernica* E. F. Warb (*S. porrigens sensu* Praeger, 1934a) (Irish Whitebeam) from the Killarney area are now known to be errors for *S. rupicola* (Rich *et al.*, 2005).

In this note, an account of the distribution and abundance of Whitebeams in the Killarney area is given based on historical records and surveys carried out between 2005 and 2008. The main aim was to estimate the population size and distribution of *S. scannelliana*, but data on all Whitebeams were collected whilst the area was searched. Data on *Sorbus aucuparia* L. (Rowan) was not collected as it is reasonably common and widespread in the area.

Members of the genus *Sorbus* at Killarney can be separated using the key below and Figure 1. In addition there are several taxa planted in Killarney town which are not included, i.e. *S. austriaca* and cultivars of *S. aria*.

1.	Leaves regularly pinnate	<i>S. aucuparia</i>
1.	Leaves simple or shallowly lobed	2
2.	Leaves simple, undersides densely white tomentose	3
2.	Leaves lobed, underside greenish-white tomentose	4
3.	Leaves oblong-obovate with 16–20 veins; fruits wider than long	<i>S. rupicola</i>
3.	Leaves ovate to elliptic with 18–28 veins; fruits longer than wide	<i>S. aria</i>
4.	Leaves with 12–17 veins, lobed 17–44% of the way to the midrib at the centre of the leaf; fruits longer than wide	<i>S. intermedia</i>
4.	Leaves with 15–23 veins, lobed 14–31% of the way to the midrib at the centre of the leaf; fruits about as long as wide	5
5.	Leaves broadly elliptic, whitish-tomentose underneath, with distinct cross-venation between the main veins	<i>S. anglica</i>
5.	Leaves elliptic, greenish-white-tomentose underneath, with cross veins indistinct	<i>S. scannelliana</i>

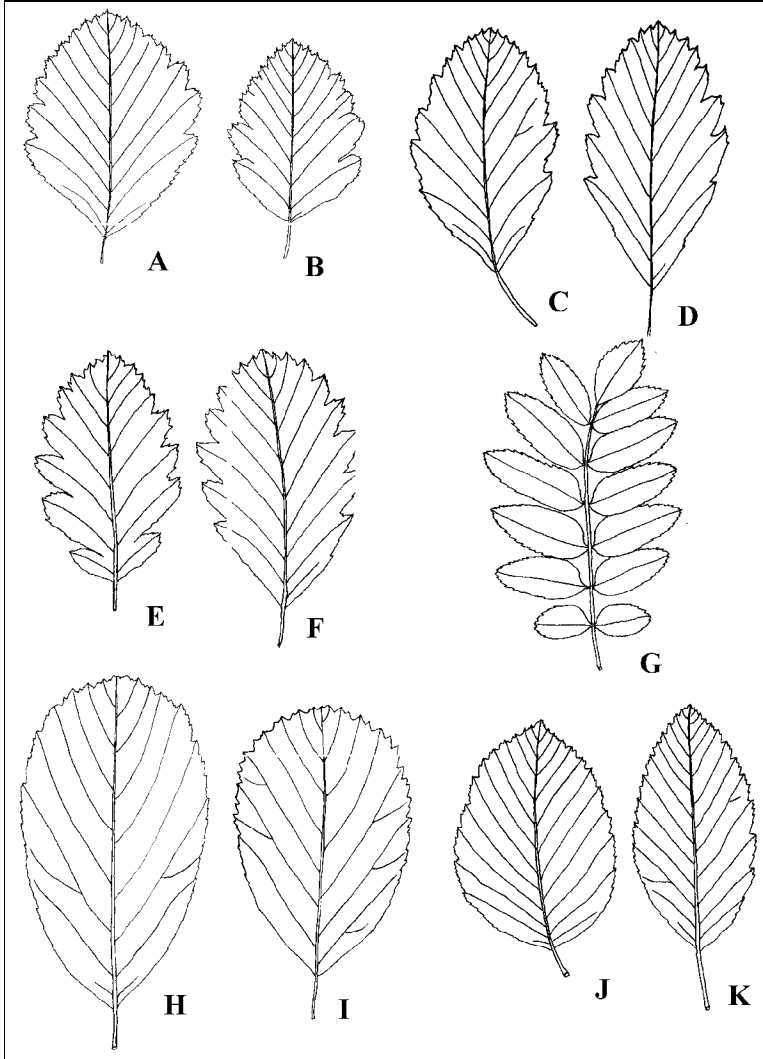
## Methods

Historical records were collated from the literature and the following herbaria: **BEL**, **BM**, **DBN**, **NMW** and **TCD**. A survey of the islands in Lough Leane carried out by those attending a BSBI meeting in August 2005 provided presence/absence data for three species (see FitzGerald & Wyse Jackson, 2005 for an account of this meeting).

A detailed survey of mainland sites was carried out in September 2008 concentrating on areas where Whitebeams had previously been recorded. The location of each Whitebeam seen was recorded with a GPS, and notes made on its estimated height (m), growth at 1.3m (cm), form as maiden or coppice and the presence of fruit. Many trees were inaccessible on cliffs and it was not possible to obtain complete data for each individual. It is likely that there

were small plants on the cliffs which could not be seen from above, and there was heavy rain and strong winds during much of the 2008 survey period making some cliff edges difficult to survey safely. The population estimates are thus minima and should not be taken to be comprehensive.

**Figure 1. Leaves from short shoots of *Sorbus* species. A, B: *S. anglica*. C, D: *S. scannelliana*. E, F: *S. intermedia*. G: *S. aucuparia*. H, I: *S. rupicola*. J, K: *S. aria*. Not to scale.**



## Results

A total of 284 records of Whitebeams between 2005 and 2008 were compiled. The only historical locality not searched was Arbutus Island, Upper Lake. Copies of all the data have been lodged with the Killarney National Park, the BSBI Vice-county Recorders, the National Biodiversity Data Centre, Waterford, Trinity College Dublin, the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, the National Museum of Wales and the BSBI Threatened Plants Database.

### *Sorbus anglica* Hedl., English Whitebeam

The earliest record of *S. anglica* traced is a specimen collected from Ross Island in August 1856 by I. Carroll (DBN). Oddly, *S. anglica* was not listed by Scully (1916), even as *S. intermedia* under which it had previously been included before being described in 1914. However, following Praeger's work on Irish *Sorbus* in the 1930s, it was regularly collected at Killarney (Praeger, 1934b).

*Sorbus anglica* was frequent (Figure 2) along the limestone rocks at Reenadinna Wood (19 plants), from Colleen Bawn Rock to Kilbeg Bay (28 plants), and in the Governor's Rock (see photo on front cover) to Library Point area of Ross Island (36 plants). Two plants occurred at Dundag Point, Muckross, one even in *Myrica-Molinia* vegetation on the lake shore. It was recorded from Crocodile Rock (6 saplings, V942.889) and Juniper Island (several plants, V949.865) in Lough Leane on a BSBI meeting in 2005, and has been recorded from Arbutus Island in the Upper Lake (Hodd, 1995). The total population is thus in excess of 90 plants.

Killarney is the only place in Ireland where *S. anglica* occurs, and to where it was presumably distributed by birds from south Wales or south-west England. It originated in Britain as a hybrid between triploid *S. porrigentifomis sensu lato* and *S. aucuparia* (Robertson *et al.*, 2009).

Only twelve trees were seen with fruit in 2008.

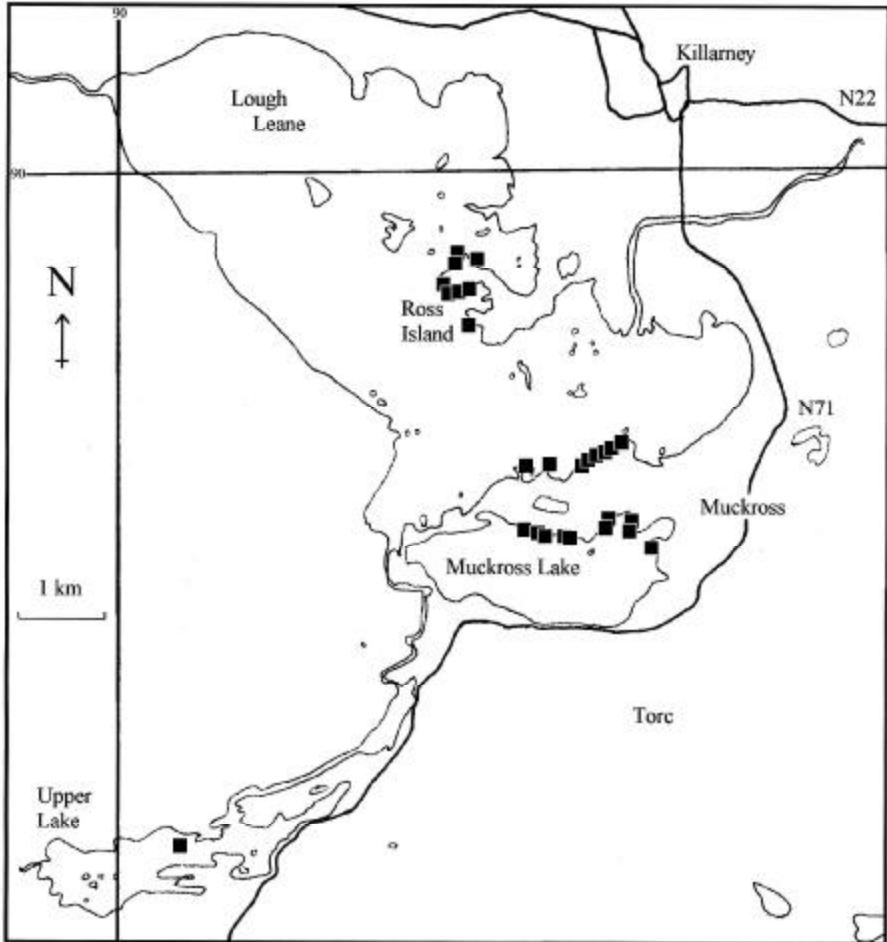
### *Sorbus aria* (L.) Crantz, Common Whitebeam

Many historical records of *S. aria* for Killarney (e.g. Mackay, 1836; Colgan & Scully, 1898) are ambiguous or incorrect, most referring to *S. rupicola*. An undated specimen collected by J. T. Mackay from woods at Killarney is a mixture of *S. aria* and *S. rupicola* (TCD) and may be of more than one origin. Scully (1916) was the first to clearly separate *S. aria* and *S. rupicola*, and reported planted *S. aria* from three sites (Beaufort demesne, and Deer Park and Home Park at Killarney).

*Sorbus aria* was collected from limestone rocks, Ross Bay in August 1932 by R. L. Praeger (**DBN**; a duplicate collection is *S. rupicola*) and was collected from woods near Killarney in August 1960 by D. E. de Vesian (**BEL**). The most recent record is of it being very rare near Library Point, Ross Island (Hodd, 1995). No plants were seen during the 2005-2008 surveys.

*Sorbus aria* is widely planted around Killarney as an ornamental tree, and several cultivars, including *S. aria* var. *longifolia*, were seen in 2008. It is widely naturalized in Ireland (the map in Preston *et al.*, 2002 however omits many records), and there is no reason it should not be naturalized in Killarney.

Figure 2. Distribution of *S. anglica* at Killarney.



## ***Sorbus aucuparia* L., Rowan**

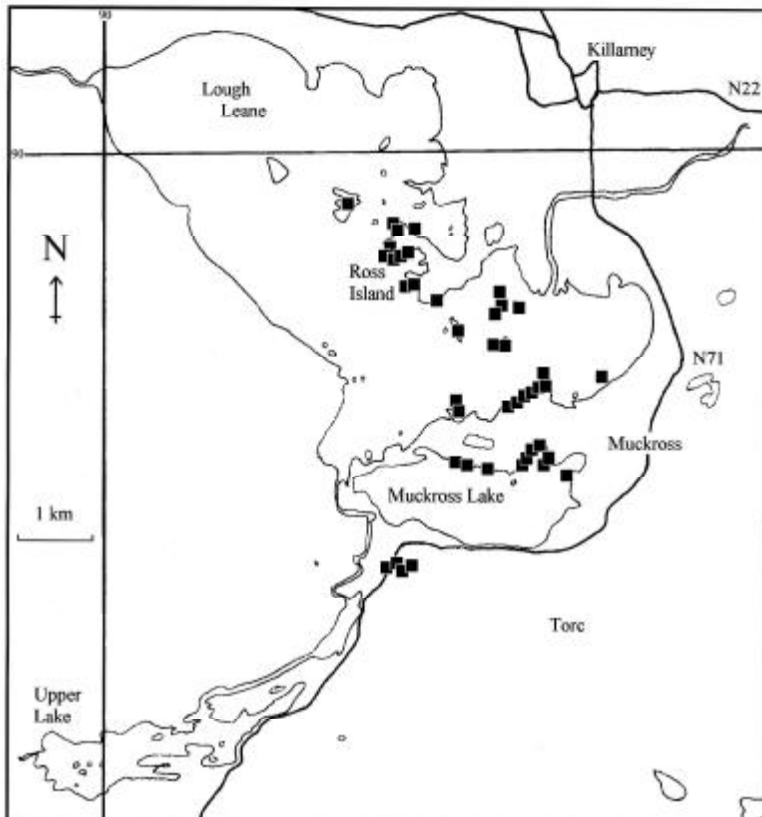
Widespread on both acidic and calcareous soils and rocks around the Killarney area. Abundant regeneration was noted in some areas.

## ***Sorbus intermedia* (Ehrh.) Pers., Swedish Whitebeam**

One coppiced shrub of *S. intermedia* c. 2 m tall was found in the lane east of Blue Hole, Ross Island at V94597.88116. This is presumably bird-sown from the trees occasionally planted in Killarney town. This native of Scandinavia and the Baltic coast is occasionally naturalized elsewhere in Ireland, and much more commonly naturalized in Britain.

This is the first record of *S. intermedia* being naturalized in H2 North Kerry.

Figure 3. Distribution of *S. rupicola* at Killarney.





## *Sorbus rupicola* (Syme) Hedl., Rock Whitebeam

The earliest Co. Kerry record of *S. rupicola* traced is that of Dr T. Molyneaux, “In the county of Kerry plentifully” [undoubtedly from Killarney] published in 1726 (Threlkeld, 1726; Colgan & Scully, 1898; Scully, 1916). The record for *Sorbus* from Innisfallen: “Here are also the fruit of the *Sorbus* or service tree” in Smith (1756) is presumed to refer to *S. rupicola*, which was recorded here in 2005. Its distribution is still essentially as described by Scully (1916) – fairly plentiful on limestone rocks around Lough Leane and the Middle Lake and on several islands in Lough Leane, and on the NW spurs of Torc Mountain and by the adjoining roadside.

*Sorbus rupicola* was confirmed as the most frequent whitebeam in the Killarney area (Figure 3). It was frequent on Carboniferous Limestone on Ross Island from Governor’s Rock to Library Point (51 plants) with one plant at the Copper Mines, along the shore of Reenadinna Wood (33 plants), from Colleen Bawn Rock to the Kilbeg Bay area (66 plants), at Dundag Point (22 plants) and on Old Red Sandstone rocks and woodland at Torc (at least 17 plants). It was also recorded from Innisfallen, Cow Island, Crow Island, Friar’s Island, Gannet Rock, Jackdaw Rock, Juniper Island, Crocodile Rock, Otter Island, Rough Island, Swallow Island and Yew Island in 2005 during a BSBI meeting, and from Ash Island in 2006 by M. Wyse Jackson. The total population is thus over 200 plants.

*Sorbus rupicola* otherwise occurs in Ireland in a few sites in the north and west, where it is generally in small quantity. It has been recorded from **H2, H15–H16, H20, H26–H29, H35, H39** and **H40** (the **H20** Wicklow record is an error, P. Carvill, pers. comm. 2003). It is widespread in Britain and Scandinavia, and rare in the Baltic States.

Unusually for *S. rupicola* which is otherwise relatively consistent morphologically, many of the Killarney plants have short leaves (Figure 1I, and hence were confused with *S. hibernica*) and may represent a local clone; cultivation experiments are required to assess whether they breed true from seed. Only one small tree was seen with fruit in 2008, but in June 2007 many of the trees on Ross Island were seen flowering.

## ***Sorbus scannelliana* T. C. G. Rich, Scannell's Whitebeam**

*Sorbus scannelliana* was first collected (as *S. anglica*) in June 1988 by T. Rich and N. Taylor (NMW), but was not recognized as distinct until March 2008 (Rich & Proctor, 2009). Initial thoughts that it may have originated as a hybrid between *S. rupicola* (tetraploid apomict) and *S. aucuparia* (diploid sexual species) have to be revised as it has now been found to be tetraploid (J. Pellicer, pers. comm. 2012).

The original tree (see photo on page 40) was refound in 2008 with four saplings east of the Blue Hole, Ross Island, on a small wooded limestone ridge above a swamp at V9469.8816. The tree was about 5 m tall with a girth of 51 cm (at 1.3m), but was leaning strongly westwards to the light. The base of the trunk was diseased but some new suckers were present. No fruits were seen but the remains of some dried-up 2007 fruit were still present on the tree. The saplings were all in deep shade and less than 35 cm tall; counts of the bud scars on the largest showed that one was at least 18 years old (in 2008), and had been damaged several times (presumably by deer browsing).

In 2011 the original type tree and four saplings were carefully fenced to exclude deer and the surrounding canopy was thinned by NPWS Conservation Ranger Pádraig O'Sullivan and other Killarney National Park staff, in order to protect from grazing and to promote flowering and fruiting. The population was inspected in July 2012 and all five plants were recorded and seen to be thriving. A small amount of immature fruit was noted in 2012 by P. O'Sullivan, but this had disappeared (presumably eaten by birds) shortly afterwards when the tree was revisited for fruit collection. *Sorbus scannelliana* is not yet in *ex situ* cultivation.

## **Discussion**

Six species of *Sorbus* have been recorded in the Killarney area, confirming it as the most diverse site for *Sorbus* in Ireland. Two of the species, *S. anglica* and *S. scannelliana*, only occur at Killarney in Ireland, the latter is endemic.

*Sorbus aucuparia* was common and widespread in the area, and abundant regeneration was noted. *Sorbus rupicola* was the most frequent of the rarer species, being particularly frequent on the limestone around the lake shores, but also on Old Red Sandstone at Torc. *Sorbus anglica* was also

widespread around the lakes on limestone but less frequent. *Sorbus scannelliana* and the alien *S. intermedia* were very rare. *Sorbus aria* was not refound.

Under the IUCN (2003) criteria for assessing threat status, *S. anglica* is 'Endangered' and *S. scannelliana* is 'Critically Endangered' in Ireland. There are too few population counts available for *S. rupicola* from elsewhere in its range in Ireland to categorically assess its overall Irish status, however its abundance at Killarney suggests that its threat status is likely to be no greater than 'Vulnerable'.

The main threat to the survival of the rarer species is lack of regeneration. It is clear from the virtual restriction of *S. anglica* and *S. rupicola* to rocky cliffs that expansion into the adjacent woodlands is probably limited by grazing (cf. Perrin *et al.*, 2006); however, given the frequency and long history of the species here, it appears that these lake shore cliffs provide plenty of niches for regeneration. The tiny population of *S. scannelliana* has been protected from grazing by deer and its welfare is subject to regular monitoring. Although we found very little fruit in 2008 which appears to have been a very poor fruiting year for *Sorbus* throughout Britain and Ireland (in contrast to 2007 which was an excellent year, at least in Britain), abundant fruit is probably produced in good years in all species.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Keepers for access to **BEL**, **BM**, **DBN**, **NMW** and **TCD**, Mark Jannink, Daniel Kelly, Mat Hodd, Toby Hodd and Caroline Mhic Daeid for their help.

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## ***Dianthus armeria* (Deptford Pink) on Inis Meáin**

### **Are there other populations out there?**

Maria Long, *BSBI Irish Officer, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9*. Tel: 00 353 (0)87 2578763. E-mail: [maria.long@bsbi.org.uk](mailto:maria.long@bsbi.org.uk)

An interesting find this year was a population of *Dianthus armeria* (Deptford Pink) on the east side of Inis Meáin (see photos on page 39), the middle of the three Aran Islands. These islands are part of Co. Galway for administrative purposes, but within the vice-county of Clare for botanical recording.

The species was found in a semi-natural grassland sward, in an area with small fields, stone walls and plenty of outcropping rock. The sward was species-rich, typical of the calcareous grasslands found on the Aran Islands, and did not contain any non-native species. Some of the more common associated species were: *Prunella vulgaris*, *Galium verum*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Festuca ovina*, *Potentilla reptans*, *Medicago lupulina*, *Arrhenatherum elatius*, *Odontites vernus*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Achillea millefolium*, *Taraxacum* agg., *Cerastium arvense*, *Centaureum erythraea*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Scorzonoides autumnalis*, *Cerastium fontanum*, *Leucanthemum vulgare* and *Agrostis stolonifera*.

There were approximately 28 plants of *D. armeria*, growing within an area of a few square metres. They were about 15m from a small road, and approximately 60m from a house (which is the last house along this road). The date of the record was 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012, and the survey was part of fieldwork for the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)-funded Irish Semi-natural Grasslands Survey (see: <http://www.botanicalenvironmental.com/projects/habitat-studies/irish-semi-natural-grasslands-survey/>). The other surveyors present were Fiona Devaney and Kristi Leyden.

The author is only aware of two other locations for this species in Ireland. One is from Horse Island in west Cork (Akeroyd and Clarke, 1993; Wilson, 2007 – notes an early record from 1950, specimen lodged at Kew; Akeroyd, Wolstenholme and Poole, 2011). The most detail is provided with the 1992 record by J.R. Akeroyd and K. Clarke. These authors also found the species in a rocky, maritime grassland situation, but the rock in that case was Old Red Sandstone. Their site was grazed tightly – the Aran Islands site is undoubtedly grazed at some stage of the year, but there were no signs of recent grazing at the time of the survey. The other location comes from a record by H. Jacob from Ovens, Co. Cork (grid square W57) and dates from 1900 (presumed to be an approximate date). [Note: this information was obtained by querying the map for the species in the BSBI Distribution

Database, or the ‘Big Database’ – see: <http://bsbidb.org.uk/>.]

The species is native and widespread in Europe, and introduced in North America (Wilson, 2007). It is relatively widespread in southern Britain, but has undergone a significant decline, mainly due to habitat loss/change (refer to the BSBI Atlas: Preston, Pearman et al., 2002). In the Atlas the habitat types are noted as “open, disturbed sites occurring in short grassland in pastures, roadsides, waysides and field margins, and as a casual on waste ground. It usually grows on dry, often mildly basic soils, but has been recorded on fen-peat.”

Although Akeroyd and Clarke published their record as native, there have been questions raised about its status in Ireland. Preston, Pearman et al. (2002) recognise the difficulties in telling whether populations are native or introduced, stating that “It is difficult to distinguish native and alien populations in both Britain and Ireland.” The relatively remote location of the Horse Island record, along with the fact that the island sees only sporadic visitors, having no permanent residents, would seem to suggest a strong possibility of a native status there at least.

So this leads me to ask a few questions:

- Does anyone else have records of this plant from other locations around Ireland?
- Does anyone have any further information on the record from Ovens, just west of Cork city?
- What do people think about its status – i.e. native or introduced?

I’d love to hear what people think on this, so do drop me a line.

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## Records for *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* in Ireland

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### Introduction

*Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* (L.) Ehrend and Poltschek (see photo on page 37), more commonly known as Yellow Archangel, is a stoloniferous herbaceous chamaephyte and a member of the Lamiaceae (Packham, 1983). In Ireland its range is restricted to a handful of eastern and south eastern counties; namely Dublin, Wicklow, Carlow and Wexford. Although considered a member of the native Irish flora (Scannell & Synnott, 1987), its current fidelity to a handful of sites in just four eastern counties suggests a species that is very much on the edge of its European range. The species becomes more abundant as one travels east across Britain towards the continent where it extends from southern Scandinavia to the northern Mediterranean and east into Turkey and Iran (Hultén, 1950). This limited range in Ireland is not unusual amongst the Irish flora as there are other species that also display similar range restrictiveness, highlighting Ireland's peripheral location on the edge of the European landmass, past glacial history and maritime climate (Webb, 1983).

The purpose of the study was to collect all known records of *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* in Ireland and to re-visit as many of these locations as possible to assess the state of these populations, if still present. This study was carried out as a dissertation for the MSc in Biological Recording at the University of Birmingham during the early summer of 2012.

Although classified as 'rare' (Curtis & McGough, 1988) the species is not protected under the current Flora Protection Order as it is still present at a sufficient number of sites to not warrant specific legal protection. This study resulted in fourteen sites for the species being located with numbers of specimens at these sites ranging from a mere handful to several hundred. However, it certainly is a species worth monitoring into the future as its long term survival at some of these sites is questionable due to potential threats as a result of land use changes and habitat loss.

Habitat loss, land use changes and urbanisation have all had a profound impact on the Irish countryside, particularly over the last two decades, resulting in many of the former sites being lost. *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* could be described as unfortunate in that both its historic and present stronghold is Co. Dublin, the Irish county most impacted upon by land changes. Many of the old Dublin records refer to areas that were once

farmland or small villages on the edge of the city. Today these areas are urbanised with the hedgerows and woodlands long removed.

The stunning yellow hooded flowers, square stems and nettle-like leaves within a woodland setting make this charismatic plant easy to identify even for the non-botanist, so should in theory present few if any problems regarding identification. However, the presence of a non-native subspecies, subsp. *argentatum* (see photo on page 37), has resulted in numerous mistaken identifications and incorrect records being made in Ireland and further afield. Some earlier atlases and floras failed to distinguish between these two subspecies, resulting in ‘abundant’ records for Yellow Archangel in Ireland being published. When all records for the true ‘Archangel’ (subsp. *montanum*) were examined, it showed that it has never been recorded outside Dublin, Wicklow, Wexford or Carlow, with the exception of a now extirpated population in Westmeath (Colgan, 1904).

Subspecies *argentatum* is a common ground cover plant used in gardens and parks and consequently has escaped into the ‘wild’ throughout Ireland especially near built-up areas where dumping of garden waste can be problematic. The subspecies is distinguishable from subsp. *montanum* with its obviously silvery/white marked leaves at all seasons (Stace, 2010) and more aggressive matted growing habit (see photo on page 37). Two other subspecies, subsp. *galeobdolon* and subsp. *flavidum*, which are found in Britain and Europe do not occur in Ireland (Packham, 1983).

Ellenberg indicator values shows that *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* is adapted to partial /moderate shade (L=4), moderate damp soils (F=5), relatively fertile soils (N=6), and weakly acidic to more basic soil conditions (R=7). It has no tolerance to salinity (S=0) (Hill *et al.*, 2004). *L. galeobdolon*’s preferred habitat type and associated plant species indicate a strong preference for calcareous soils within *Corylus* – *Fraxinus* woodland. *Corylus* is a major constituent of the under-storey of forest on base-rich soils (Kelly and Kirby, 1982) and all fourteen sites returned *Corylus* from their sampled relevés.

## **Background research**

During February and March 2012, research to establish the numbers and distribution of records relating to *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* in Ireland began. The primary source of historic records came from the extensive collection of county and national floras and atlases held in the library at the Botanic Gardens, Dublin. Twelve digital images of voucher specimens held in the herbariums of the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin and the British Natural History Museum, London were obtained. A single voucher specimen



held in the herbarium at Trinity College Dublin was viewed in early May 2012.

Databases held by the National Biodiversity Data Centre, National Parks and Wildlife Service and BSBI were obtained and cross referenced with historic records found in County Floras. In the 1990s, the Flora of Dublin was published and the original field recording cards for relevant areas were made available. The Rare Vascular Plant survey of Wicklow (Curtis & Wilson, 2007) also provided detailed information on locations for *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum*. In addition, research carried out during a previous rare plants survey in the early 1990s on behalf of the Wildlife Service provided detailed recording sheets for *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* at a number of locations.

### **Field work and records**

39 sites for *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* were determined in Ireland based on all records, of which 14 had populations still present during the field work stage in May and June 2012 (see Table 1). Where a population was located, the grid reference and site altitude was recorded using a handheld GPS device (Garmin E-trex). The next step was to examine the surrounding area and record the general condition of the habitat and any perceived threats. An estimate of the numbers of *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum*, flowering and non-flowering was made, or in populations with only a few specimens, an actual count was conducted.

A total of 16 relevés (2m x 2m) was collected from the fourteen sites where the species was located using the field methods of the Braun-Blanquet school of phytosociology (Braun-Blanquet and Tuxen, 1952; White and Doyle, 1982). Nomenclature follows Stace (2010) for higher plants and Blockheel and Long (1998) for bryophytes. An example of the results collected from one of the relevés is shown in Table 2. Due to space constraints it is not possible to include all relevé and habitat data from all fourteen sites in this article however any information in relation to any of the sites can be obtained by contacting the author.

Table 1: All records for *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* in Ireland. Present day populations (with grid references) are highlighted in bold.

### **DUBLIN (H21)**

**WOODLANDS / LUTTRELLSTOWN:** O03953.36452 (Wade 1794; Hart 1867; Colgan 1904; Norton 1985 & 1990; Shackleton 1987; Doogue 1991; Meehan 2012). **ASHTOWN – BALLYBOGHILL:** (Wade 1794).

**CARDIFF'S BRIDGE:** O01214.37714 (Wade 1794; Meehan 2012). **FINGLAS:** (Carroll 1867; Colgan 1904; McArde 1905). **ST. CATHERINE'S WOODS / LUCAN DEMENSE:** O02187.35817 (Cyb. 1897; Suppl. 1956 & 1954; Shackleton 1984; Doogue 1991; Meehan 2012). **ARTANE:** (Kinahan 1892). **SANTRY RIVER:** (Colgan 1895; Suppl. 1935). **LEIXLIP (CO. DUBLIN):** (Moore 1866; Colgan 1904). **CROOKSLING GLEN:** O04900.25725 (Colgan 1896; Parnell 1991; Meehan 2012). **VESEY'S DEMENSE:** (Colgan 1894 & 1904). **ROPER'S-REST (CRUMLIN):** (Threlkeld 1726). **TYMON CASTLE:** (Kinahan 1890). **KELLY'S GLEN:** (Archer 1898). **ISLANDBRIDGE:** O11582.33998 (Burbridge & Colgan 1903; P.R. 1986; Doogue 1991; Meehan 2012). **LUGMORE GLEN:** O06371.25311 (Colgan 1903; Parnell 1983; Norton 1990; Doogue 1991; Meehan 2012). **DRIMNAGH:** (Colgan 1900). **BOHERNABREENA:** (Colgan 1893). **GLENCULLEN:** (Brennan 1853). **RATHFARNHAM:** (Smyth (Cyb.) 1897). **EDMONSTOWN:** (Praeger 1902; Suppl. 1948). **COOLOCK:** (Suppl. 1933). **BALLYMAICE SLADE:** O08498.24400 (Suppl. 1955; Meehan 2012). **TYMON LANE, BALROTHERY:** (Suppl. 1956). **KILGOBBIN:** (Carvill 1976; Carvill & DNFC 1983). **GLENASMOLE / FRIARSTOWN / GLASSAMUCKY:** O09017.23020 (Suppl. 1948; Kelly 1986; Jackson 1988; Parnell 1988; Norton 1990; Curtis & Meehan 2012). **PALMERSTOWN MARSH / FONTHILL:** O06876.35609 (Norton 1985; Fitzgerald 1985; Doogue 1991; Meehan 2012). **WRENS NEST WEIR:** (Norton 1985; Shackleton 1985).

## **WICKLOW (H20)**

**KNOCKSINK WOOD:** O21635.17465 (Templeton 1802; Bruncker 1930; Carvill & Curtis 1973; Curtis & Wilson 2007; Meehan 2012). **DARGLE GLEN:** O23816.16540 (Fl. Hib. 1836; Barrington 1864; Bruncker 1924; Curtis 1982; Curtis & Wilson 2007; Curtis & Meehan 2012). **FASSAROE:** (Barrington 1872). **POWERSCOURT WOODS:** (Mackay 1824; Curtis 1980). **POULAPHUCA:** (Praeger 1895).

## **CARLOW (H13)**

**KILCARRY BRIDGE:** S89369.62578 (Stelfox 1926; FitzGearld & Curtis 1990; Green & Meehan 2012). **ALTAMONT WOODS:** (Booth 1971). **BUNCLODY, COOLAPHUCA WOODS:** (Booth 1971).

## WEXFORD (H 12)

**CARR HILL WOOD:** S91339.58247 (Booth 1977; FitzGearld 1990; Green & Meehan 2012). **COURTOWN WOODS:** T18612.56565 (Green 2009; Meehan 2012). **ENNISCORTHY:** (Morrison 1866; Rawlins 1941).

## WESTMEATH (H23)

LOUGH ENNEL: (Foot 1866).

Species	Cover Abundance (Braun-Blanquet)	Species	Cover Abundance (Braun-Blanquet)
<i>Lamiastrum galeobdolon</i>	2	<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	1
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	3	<i>Veronica montana</i>	1
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	3	<i>Kindbergia praelonga</i>	2
<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifoli.</i>	+	<i>Brachythecium rutabulum</i>	2
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	1	<i>Lathraea squamaria</i>	1
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	1	<i>Poa trivialis</i>	2
<i>Hedera helix</i>	2	<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	2
<i>Silene dioica</i>	3	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	2
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	2	<i>Rubus ssp.</i>	2
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	1	<i>Tuidium tamariscium</i>	2
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	3		

Table 2: Example of plant community data collected at a relevé (taken at Crooksling Glen, Dublin (**H21**) - O04900.25725).

## Discussion

A total of fourteen sites with *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* were located during this survey with populations ranging from just a handful of plants to several hundred. There has been a significant decline in sites for the species nationally, with the urbanisation of Co. Dublin contributing greatly to this. The current sites in Co. Dublin, with the possible exception of the Cardiff's Bridge, appear to be safe from future development etc. due to their locations within SACs and parklands. The Cardiff's Bridge population had only three flowering shoots when visited in May 2012 and its location is precariously close to a busy road, putting it at risk if the road were to be widened in the future. The Lugmore Glen site is perhaps the most spectacular of all the sites for *L. galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* in Ireland with hundreds of vigorous plants stretching down a narrow hazel wood ravine. Dialogue and cooperation with the local farming community on the Dublin hills around Lugmore is crucial to ensure that the hazel woodlands remain intact and that livestock,

particularly sheep, are fenced away from the site to prevent intrusion.

In Wicklow, the Knocksink Wood populations are very impressive and benefit from the protection of being within a Nature Reserve, ensuring long term survival. On the other hand, The Dargle Glen population is very small and is in definite threat of being lost due to the rampant growth of *Prunus laurocerasus* that is already having a detrimental effect on parts of the surrounding woodlands.

The Kilcarrig site in Co. Carlow along the River Slaney is in good shape with no obvious threats. Nearby sheep grazing is contained away from the river bank edge where the population is found however this situation would need frequent monitoring.

Carrhill Woods in Wexford is an important national stronghold for the species with four stands found within a small area of the woodland. Agricultural activities on the edge of this woodland have impacted one of these stands; intensive fertilizer application has resulted in thick swathes of *Urtica dioica* becoming dominant. The very recent discovery of a new population in Courtown Woods by Paul Green in 2009 is an interesting development. No previous records for this population could be found and it would appear it is a genuine new record. How it has evaded notice for so long is puzzling!

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***Cardamine x zahlbruckneriana* (C. *hirsuta* x C. *flexuosa*)  
A new county record for Dublin (H21)**

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

A single plant was found on disturbed roadside soil just 30 meters on the Dublin side of the Glencairn Luas station (O1951.2555). It was much bigger than either parent with greatly elongated inflorescences. Each inflorescence was of a distinctly regular zig-zag pattern bearing small sterile fruits with fuzzy stigmas and a few tiny white flowers. The few leaves present on this rather old plant were pinnate.

This small patch of disturbed ground had a curious assemblage of plants including: *Linum bienne* (Pale Flax), *Helminthotheca echioides* (Bristly Oxtongue), *Chenopodium bonus-henricus* (Good-King-Henry), *Lactuca serriola* (Prickly Lettuce), *Lamium album* (White Dead-nettle), *Galeopsis tetrahit* (Common Hemp-nettle). Despite being quite dry now it also had a few plants of *Glyceria declinata* (Small Sweet-grass) and *Veronica anagallis-aquatica* (Blue Water-speedwell) - perhaps due to the very wet year?

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***Gnaphalium coarctatum* Willd. (Purple Cudweed)  
A composite new to Ireland**

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

While botanising on 12 August 2012 in gravelly/sandy waste ground (see photo on back cover) close to Irishtown Nature Park (O1993.3326) in Co. Dublin (**H21**) I came across a plant which I took to be a *Filago*, a genus with which I am not very familiar. Two more experienced botanists in the Dublin Naturalists' Field Club (Declan Doogue and David Nash) were not convinced and sought help from Sylvia Reynolds, an expert on aliens. She keyed it out as a *Gnaphalium* but was puzzled as to the species. Sylvia passed the specimen on to Paul Green who kindly did the detective work needed to identify the plant as *Gnaphalium coarctatum*, a species of Cudweed not hitherto recorded from Ireland and, indeed, it has been recorded only once before in the British Isles, in Guernsey in 2003 by Graham Le Tissier and Bridget Ozanne (Ozanne, 2004). *G. coarctatum* is originally from South America but has

spread widely in New Zealand, Australia and parts of Africa and Europe.

The colony of some 150 individuals was spread over an area of about 25m x 8m - tennis court size approximately. The substratum was compacted sandy soil and the vegetation was fairly sparse with bare areas and some moss cover. The main associated species were *Juncus bufonius* (Toad Rush), *Agrostis stolonifera* (Creeping Bent), *Holcus lanatus* (Yorkshire-fog) and small leaf rosettes of *Conyza floribunda* (Bilbao's Fleabane), and other species included *Trifolium pratense* (Red Clover), *Tussilago farfara* (Colt's-foot), *Hypochaeris radicata* (Cat's-ear), *Blackstonia perfoliata* (Yellow-wort), *Daucus carota* (Wild Carrot) and *Odontites vernus* (Red Bartsia).

The area in question occurs at the eastern end of a large rectangular enclosed space of about 400m x 150m and about 10m from the brambles which mark the boundary of Irishtown Nature Park. This larger parcel of land - mostly flat, bare and stony, with widely scattered individuals of dwarfed *Buddleja davidii* (Butterfly-bush), *Hirschfeldia incana* (Hoary Mustard), *Centranthus ruber* (Red Valerian), *Artemisia vulgaris* (Mugwort), *Dipsacus fullonum* (Teasel), *Senecio inaequidens* (Narrow-leaved Ragwort), etc. - looks as if it were prepared for some huge Celtic Tiger development which died the death.

From a few yards away the plant typically is fairly drab, up to 25cm tall, erect, with tight clusters of capitula in the upper third of the inflorescence. Small leaves are widely spaced on the stem and they are green above but covered with felted hairs beneath, as is the stem. Sylvia Reynolds noted that 'fresh inflorescences had distinctly pinky-red bracts' and that 'purplish immature and darker mature papillate seeds were found in the older inflorescences.'

Sylvia Reynolds, Julian Reynolds and David Nash visited the site on 15 September and I am grateful for their notes which I have incorporated in my own observations above. I am particularly indebted to Sylvia Reynolds for her help and encouragement and for consulting authorities in Northern Ireland (Graham Day) and England (Eric Clement) to ascertain the status of the species. David Nash also kindly alerted me to the Guernsey record in *BSBI News*.

### Reference:

Ozanne, B. (2004). *Gnaphalium coarctatum*, new to Guernsey and the British Isles. *BSBI News* 97: 53.

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## The Hills are Alive

David McNeill, 13 Greystown Park, Belfast, BT9 6UN

The Belfast Hills stretch for almost 10 miles in a southwesterly direction from Carnmoney Hill in Newtownabbey to White Mountain overlooking Lisburn. The southern and eastern edges of the range terminate in impressive scarps, which tower over North and West Belfast. The North Belfast skyline is dominated by Cavehill (368m), the West Belfast skyline by Divis (478m) together with Black Mountain, and the Lisburn skyline by the sharp peak of Collin Mountain (328m).

Cavehill has long been a popular playground for the citizens of Belfast. The scarp slopes are heavily wooded and Cavehill Country Park provides a range of amenities including a network of paths. Access to Divis and Black Mountain has recently been opened up due to acquisition by the National Trust. Other public areas include the Woodland Trust property at Carnmoney Hill, Belfast City Council's Colin Glen Forest Park and the Ulster Wildlife Trust's Slievenacloy nature reserve. The Belfast Hills Partnership has been formed to work towards improved management of the area.

Many parts of the Belfast Hills have a rich and colourful flora. For example, wonderful displays of orchids can be seen at Slievenacloy and on Collinward above Belfast Zoo. *Adoxa moschatellina* (Moschatel) remains in its single station on the wooded slopes of Cavehill. This article will focus on three other rare species first found in the area by the great Belfast botanist John Templeton in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

*Saxifraga hypnoides* (Mossy Saxifrage) is a declining species of the Antrim basaltic scarp. The joint first county record was made from Cavehill by John Templeton in 1797. However, apart from two anonymous pre-1969 records from Whitewell Quarry (on the slopes of Collinward) and from Black Mountain, there have been no further reported sightings from anywhere in the Belfast Hills. Then in May 2012 the Belfast Hills Partnership organised a Bioblitz on Cavehill. Whilst surveying low cliffs north of McArt's Fort, I was surprised to spot two flowering clumps of *Saxifraga hypnoides* (see photo on page 38), accompanied by *Populus tremula* (Aspen) and *Orobancha alba* (Thyme Broomrape). It was fortunate that the Bioblitz coincided with the flowering period of the saxifrage, but could this possibly have been where Templeton had stood more than 200 years earlier? Incidentally, the very first record of *Orobancha alba* from Britain or Ireland was from Cavehill by John Templeton prior to 1793.

*Lycopodium clavatum* (Stag's-horn Clubmoss) is a rapidly declining

species of the Antrim hills. It was first recorded in the county by John Templeton in 1798 on Black Mountain. There are several subsequent records from Divis and Black Mountain, but none later than 1914. W.J.C. Tomlinson discovered a new site above Ligoniel in North Belfast in 1907 and further sightings were made on Wolf Hill (in the same vicinity) in 1955 and in the 1960s. The plant has not been reported from any of these various sites since and indeed there has been no record for the whole county since 1975. However, in 2011 I received a report of *Lycopodium clavatum* from Collin Mountain at the southern end of the Belfast Hills. This had been noted during a Northern Ireland Environment Heritage Service survey of the Slievenacloy nature reserve. In summer 2012 I visited the site. Only a solitary stem could be found at the grid reference I had been given. Thankfully, however, two large healthy populations were found nearby on the dry northern slopes of Collin, some distance from the summit. It seems that this plant continues to have a foothold in the Belfast Hills, helped presumably by the sympathetic cattle-grazing on the site.

*Vaccinium vitis-idaea* (Cowberry) is a local species of bogs and upland areas in Antrim. First recorded from the county by John Templeton from the summit of Divis some time prior to 1825, the only subsequent sighting from the Belfast Hills was when Miss Kertland found it on Cavehill in 1946. In September 2012, whilst ascending Divis from the north-west, I stumbled on a colony of *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* amongst rocks on the brow of the flat summit area. Had this inconspicuous little shrub remained undetected in this spot for approximately 200 years?

So 2012 brought much cause for celebration. Celebration of the pioneering work of a great Belfast naturalist. Celebration of the survival locally of some of our rare and fascinating mountain plants. And celebration of the Belfast Hills' continuing attraction as a haven of peace and a sanctuary for wildlife. I hope that the naturalists of tomorrow will have as much pleasure in walking these hills as I have had over the past number of years. Perhaps one of them will have the good fortune to relocate *Juniperus communis* (Juniper) recorded by W. Millen above the Windy Gap on Black Mountain before 1863, or meet with *Pseudorchis albida* (Small-white Orchid) seen as recently as 1988 on the slopes of Collinward above Belfast Zoo, or rediscover Miss Kertland's 1946 Cavehill site for *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*. Others will count themselves fortunate simply to be able to tramp in the hills with the skylark's song ringing all around.

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## A report on the Flora of Cork (H3-H5), 2012

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### Introduction

The very wet 'summer' of 2012, effectively ruled out the botanical exploration of river-courses; consequently, fieldwork was instead focused on the flora of hedgebanks and road-verges. This work provided many new stations for naturalised populations of *Geranium x oxonianum* (Druce's Crane's-bill) and *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum* (Variegated Yellow Archangel), both of which are increasing in frequency as discards, in Co. Cork. Moreover, the equally colourful (and equally rampant) *Arum italicum* subsp. *italicum* (Italian Lords-and-Ladies) continues to spread on grassy road-verges, having been dispatched from nearby gardens, where it no doubt quickly overran its allotted space. Virtually all Cork populations of this taxon, are the variety 'Marmorum', with its conspicuous, milky-veined, overwintering leaves, that are on display in its habitat from late-October onwards.

Rose taxa continue to be recorded (and their distribution patterns fine-tuned) on an annual basis, both in the vicinity of Cork city and Cork harbour, and throughout the county generally. Decades of recording of this truly fascinating genus, have long since established that the interspecific cross, *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *Rosa x suberecta*) is the most widespread and *dominant* rose hybrid in Co. Cork, the second most frequent Cork hybrid being the cross, *Rosa canina* (Dog-rose) x *R. tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose) (= *R. x scabriuscula*). However, in the north of the county, where the vice-county boundaries of Mid Cork (**H4**) and East Cork (**H5**) conjoin with those of Co. Limerick (**H8**), the interspecific cross, *Rosa stylosa* (Short-styled Field-rose) x *R. canina* (Dog-rose) (= *R. x andegavensis*) becomes locally dominant.

Ongoing yearly monitoring of Cork City populations of *Veronica polita* (Grey Field-speedwell) during the period 1995-2012, shows this pretty little annual to still be of locally frequent occurrence in numerous garden-borders on both the north and south sides of the River Lee. This long-term study, strongly indicates that Cork City holds the largest concentration of *Veronica polita* populations in Ireland, an archaeophyte that has drastically

decreased in frequency throughout Ireland since *c.* 1950.

Similar monitoring of the Co. Cork distribution of the sedge hybrid, *Carex divulsa* (Grey Sedge) x *C. muricata* (Prickly Sedge), reveals that it has, to date, been recorded in six 10-km squares (thirteen 1-km squares), and is currently (2012) known to be extant in all six hectads, and in ten 1-km squares.

On 9 March, fieldwork in the Mayfield area of Cork City (**H5**, W70.73.) allowed a rechecking of two, small, *Allium vineale* (Wild Onion) populations: one on a green at the junction of Kerry Lane/Springfield Estate; the other on a green at the southern end of Kerry Lane (same 1-km square), where it was accompanied by some naturalised plants of *Melissa officinalis* (Lemon Balm) and *Myosotis sylvatica* (Wood Forget-me-not), this latter new to the Cork City flora. Wood Forget-me-not is surprisingly rare as an adventive in Co. Cork, given that it is such a common border-plant in gardens generally, and produces copious seed, while the deciduous fruit-calyses (with their hooked-hairs) are readily distributed on clothing and footwear, and on the fur of animals.

On 13 March, initial fieldwork was undertaken on Military Road (**H5**, W68.72) on the north side of Cork City, where the ornamental annual, *Briza maxima* (Greater Quaking-grass) was found naturalised in the grounds of the Ambassador Hotel. Here it cohabited with *Veronica polita* (Grey Field-speedwell) in the heather-beds, and at the base of boundary-walls. A nearby cul-de-sac produced a previously unrecorded stand of *Allium vineale* (Wild Onion) – one of the tiny, discrete, relictual colonies of this native species that occur on the Old Red Sandstone outcrops on the north side of Cork City, and which steadfastly follow this outcrop eastwards to the River Glashaboy estuary (**H5**, W72.73) near to Glanmire village. A subsequent visit to Rathcooney Cemetery (**H5**, W70.75), showed *Valerianella carinata* (Keeled-fruited Cornsalad) to be an abundant, rampant weed in the new section of the cemetery, while small stands of *Allium vineale* (Wild Onion) (long known from here) were refound in both the old and new sections of the cemetery.

On 21 March, while on a spin in the Watergrasshill area (**H5**, W75.84), large roadside stands of *Lamium galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum* (Variegated Yellow Archangel) were seen to occur on the minor road to Glenville. (Further roadside populations of this decorative, rampant, adventive

were recorded throughout April and May – such as the following hectad records from mostly within a 10-km radius of Cork City: **1.** At Upper Glanmire village (**H5**, W70.77); **2.** Between Glennamought Bridge and Kilcully Crossroads, Cork City (**H5**, W67.75); **3.** On a road-junction embankment (**H4**, W60.76) south of Knockacorbally, close to Blarney; **4.** South of Killeagh Crossroads (**H5**, W68.82), near Carrignavar village.

Most car spins in May, were utilised to update Mid Cork/East Cork records for *Euphorbia hyberna* (Irish Spurge) – a long-established botanical recording routine for my wife Marie and I, which is always one of the major floral highlights in any given year. Close to Cork City, the Blarney-Courtbrack area (**H4**, hectads W6.7., W5.7. & W5.8) is particularly blessed to hold many acidic hedgebank populations of Irish Spurge (though most of these individual populations consist of just 2-6 plants), and it is usually accompanied by *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell), *Primula vulgaris* (Primrose), *Viola riviniana* (Common Dog-violet) and *Stellaria holostea* (Greater Stitchwort). A similar visual treat can be encountered on the northeastern side of Cork City, on taking the Crushnacon byroad (**H5**, W74.85) (near Watergrasshill) westwards to Serahane Crossroads (**H5**, W72.84) and thence SSW to Buck Leary's Crossroads (**H5**, W71.79.) and finally south to Sallybrook village (**H5**, W72.76).

On 19 May, Paul Green informed me of his discovery of *Cortaderia richardii* (Early Pampas-grass) growing on rocks in the river at Glengarriff (**H3**, V9.5.), while *Geranium x oxonianum* (Druce's Crane's-bill) was established on the riverbank here.

On 20 May, the small stand of the sedge hybrid, *Carex divulsa* x *C. muricata* was rechecked on its boreen embankment site (**H4**, W56.73) in the Inniscarra area, where I originally added it to hectad W5.7. in May 2007. [Note: On 30 May 2012, this sedge hybrid was found in a second 1-km square in hectad W5.7. The find consisted of a single tussock, bordering the River Shournach, a short distance west of the 'Burnt Mill' footbridge (**H4**, W58.76), near Blarney. As for its two parents, *Carex divulsa* (Grey Sedge) occurred frequently on roadsides along the River Shournach Road, while two clumps of *C. muricata* (Prickly Sedge) were found beside the footbridge. A single, long-established plant of *Gunnera tinctoria* (Giant-rhubarb) was sited on the left bank of the river beside the footbridge, while long-persistent, naturalised

clumps of *Aquilegia vulgaris* (Columbine) were seen in flower on the right bank of the River Shournach, within the precincts of the old mill complex, a short distance downriver of the footbridge. Other road-margin finds in the immediate area included: a single, flowering clump of *Melica uniflora* (Wood Melick), some populations of *Eupatorium cannabinum* (Hemp-agrimony) and *Agrimonia procera* (Fragrant Agrimony) (confirmed later in the season at the fruit-stage), and naturalised plants of *Calystegia pulchra* (Hairy Bindweed) and *Ribes rubrum* (Red Currant).]

On 25 May, a rather decrepit naturalised bush of *Rosa rugosa* (Japanese Rose) was found at the western end (**H5**, W68.73) of the Glen Amenity Park, Cork City, while a healthy bush of established *Melissa officinalis* (Lemon Balm) occurred close-by. This Old Red Sandstone glen is the only known location in Cork City for *Senecio sylvaticus* (Heath Groundsel), and holds one of only a very few known extant Co. Cork sites for *Filago minima* (Small Cudweed).

On 17 June, *Rosa* recording in the Blarney area (hectad **H4**, W5.7.), turned up roadside hedgebank stands of *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) along the northwestern branch of Killowen T-junction (**H4**, W58.77), where a single, small tree of *Taxus baccata* (Yew) also occurred, a very rare species, even as a planted specimen, in Co. Cork hedgebanks. Two, separate populations of the interspecific hybrid, *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *R. x suberecta*), were found in the vicinity of Wise's T-junction (**H4**, W58.78. & W58.79). Moreover, *Rosa x suberecta* was subsequently found in two further hedgebank sites: **1.** Close to Courtbrack church (**H4**, W56.79) on the minor road to Bohernamona T-junction (**H4**, W57.79); and **2.** On the hilly stretch of roadway, adjacent to Courtbrack Bridge (**H4**, W55.79).

On 20 June, en route to the Kishkeam area (**H4**, R2.0.) for a rose-survey, an impromptu stop was made at Longfield's Bridge on the River Blackwater (**H4**, W51.97), some 4.5 km west of Mallow town. To my surprise, *Campanula portenschlagiana* (Adrian Bellflower) was naturalised on both bridge-paraphets, while the cul-de-sac adjacent to the bridge on the right bank of the river, yielded a single bush of the rose cross, *Rosa canina* (Common Dog-rose) x *R. tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose) (= *R. x scabriuscula*). *Rosa arvensis* proved common in roadside hedgebanks in this



*Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum*

Ballymaice Slade, Co.Dublin, May 2012. Photo: S.T. Meehan © 2012



*Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum*

Growing on roadside near Newcastle, Co. Dublin, June 2012.

Photo: S.T. Meehan © 2012. See page 23.



*Saxifraga hypnoides* (Mossy Saxifrage)

North of McArt's Fort, Co. Antrim. Photo: D. McNeill © 2012. See page 31.



*Valerianella dentata* (Narrow-fruited Cornsalad)

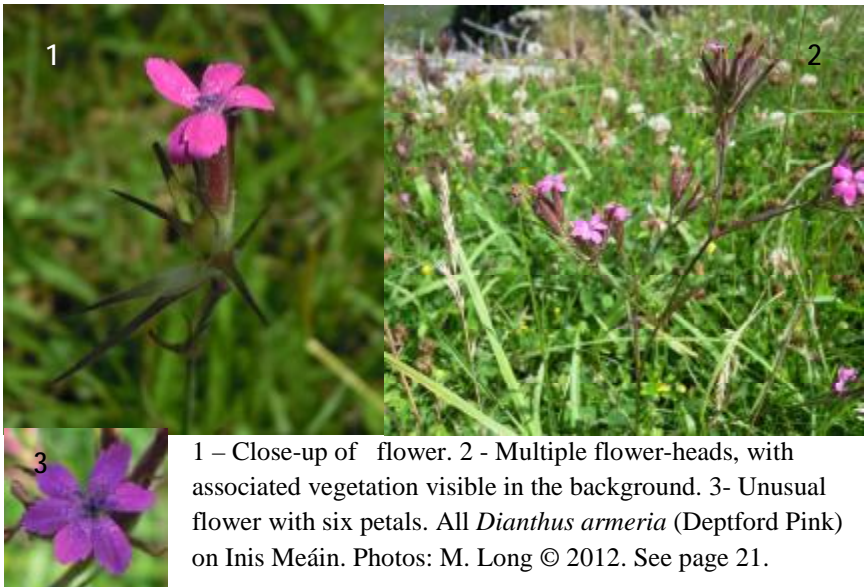
Disused railway at Campile, Co. Wexford

Photo: P. O'Meara © 2012. See page 51.





Overview of area where population of *Dianthus armeria* was growing. Inis Meáin. Photo: M. Long © 2012. See page 21.



1 – Close-up of flower. 2 - Multiple flower-heads, with associated vegetation visible in the background. 3- Unusual flower with six petals. All *Dianthus armeria* (Deptford Pink) on Inis Meáin. Photos: M. Long © 2012. See page 21.



Sown verge of road leading to Waterford Airport.

Insert: *Parentucellia viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia). Photos: R. Thompson © 2009  
See page 49.



*Sorbus scannelliana* enclosure showing fence, Ross Island  
(Scannell's Whitebeam). M. Jannink © 2012. See page 11.



area. A subsequent stop at Keel Crossroads (**H4**, R25.03) produced subadjacent, single bushes of *Rosa micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar) and *Rosa x suberecta*, together with occasional bushes of *Rosa arvensis*, though the rose-flora in this somewhat acidic upland region, was distinctly poor. A single plant of *Geranium x oxonianum* (Druce's Crane's-bill) in beautiful flower, occurred as a garden-discard on a roadside here. The eastern arm of Gurtearagh Crossroads (**H4**, R29.08) held roadside stands of planted *Populus tremula* (Aspen), *Syringa vulgaris* (Lilac), *Prunus domestica s. lato* (Wild Plum), and the ubiquitous *Lonicera nitida* (Wilson's Honeysuckle). The bank of a stream, at the end of a gated farm-boreen, produced a single bush of *Rosa x suberecta* (*R. sherardii* x *R. rubiginosa*), while the main road hedgebank nearby, yielded a single bush of the rose hybrid, *Rosa micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar) x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *R. x bigeneris*), an addition to hectad R2.0. This long stretch of roadway held an abundance of *Rosa canina* (Dog-rose) (in its myriad of forms) and of *Rosa corymbifera* (Hairy Dog-rose). The final stop was on a minor road to the north of both Dromagh Church (**H4**, R34.98. & R34.99) and the N72 (Mallow-Killarney Road), to the west of Banteer village. This delightful minor road produced many bushes of *Rosa x suberecta*, an abundance of *Rosa canina* (Dog-rose) and *Rosa corymbifera* (Hairy Dog-rose) in addition to scattered bushes of *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose) and its interspecific hybrid, *Rosa x scabriuscula*.

On 29 June, botanical work was undertaken in the Rathcooney Crossroads – Sallybrook area (**H5**, W71.75. & W72.75) close to Cork City, with the objective of resurveying the widely-scattered, partially fruit-fertile putative F2 segregants of the interspecific cross, *Geranium purpureum* (Little Robin) x *Geranium robertianum* (Herb Robert) that occur in this area. The background to this intriguing, ongoing study, is as follows: On 12 May 1998, a small, flowering population of *Geranium purpureum* was found on a hedgebank at Rathcooney Crossroads (**H5**, W71.75), where it cohabited with *Geranium robertianum* (O'Mahony, 1999). While rechecking this *G. purpureum* population on 19 May 2003, two plants of the highly fruit-sterile F1 hybrid between these two species were discovered here (O'Mahony, 2004). Moreover, on a further visit to this site on 4 October 2005, *variably fruit-fertile* F2 segregants of this hybrid were found to be distributed over a short

stretch of the eastern arm of the crossroads, where they were of frequent occurrence, while the sculpturing of their mature mericarps displayed an ornamentation-pattern identical to that of their *G. robertianum* parent (O'Mahony, 2006). During the period June-October 2010, a far more thorough survey of the distribution of the putative F2 hybrid segregants in the Rathcooney area was undertaken, and this work established that these derivative, fertile hybrid populations had, in the interim period, extended their area of distribution northwards and eastwards from their original Rathcooney Crossroads base, for a distance of approximately 1.8 km. (O'Mahony, 2011). Further work undertaken here in 2011, together with the repeat distributional survey of June 2012, has confirmed that these hybrid populations are now well established, and seemingly capable of maintaining themselves indefinitely, in this area.

The *extent* to which fruit-production in these hybrid populations is initiated by cross-pollination from their *G. robertianum* parent, is unknown. Yet it is likely to be very high, bearing in mind that this species occurs in abundance in all of the known hybrid sites, and given the fact that the fertile hybrid anthers are tardily dehiscent, and tend to deposit very little pollen on their own stigmatic-branches. Moreover, a variable percentage of anthers in many hybrid flowers are minute, hyaline, and abortive, while some hybrid flowers bear fully-developed anthers that are flattened, and devoid of pollen-grains.

In visual appearance, the hybrid flowers are very like those of *G. robertianum*, the petal-limbs being pale-lilac in colour, and obovate-cuneate in shape (though the hybrid flowers are often only 8-10 mm in diameter), but the untidy admixture of *hyaline*, *aborted* anthers, and *tardily-dehiscent* yellow- and red-flushed fertile anthers, are very distinctive for the hybrid populations.

On 2 July, morning-botany at the junction of Lovers Walk/Beale's Hill ((H5, W69.72), Montenotte, Cork City, allowed a quick survey of the tall, mortared-sandstone walls here. One wall-face held a single plant of double-flowered *Chelidonium majus* (Greater Celandine), a rare naturalised species in Co. Cork, while the wall-tops held populations of *Vulpia myuros* (Rat's-tail Fescue), a common Cork grass that displays elegant, wand like inflorescences, which belie its unwarranted English name. The equally elegant *Mycelis muralis* (Wall Lettuce) is naturalised on these wall-tops in small quantity, and is also unaccountably scarce in the heart of Cork City, despite its long tenure of residence there. At the base of a wall near the top of Beale's Hill, the beautiful *Pseudofumaria lutea* (Yellow Corydalis) had many seedlings in evidence – a welcome experience for me, as, for no obvious reason, this species rarely naturalises in Co. Cork.

On 5 July, a few hours' of rose-recording was undertaken on the Glenville-Rathcormack Road (R614) between Pound Crossroads (**H5**, W74.89) and Gearagh Crossroads (**H5**, W77.89). *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose) and its interspecific hybrid, *Rosa x scabriuscula* (*R. canina* x *R. tomentosa*), occurred here frequently, together with an abundance of *Rosa canina* (Dog-rose) and *R. corymbifera* (Hairy Dog-rose). The hybrid cross, *Rosa x suberecta* (*R. sherardii* x *R. rubiginosa*) was sparingly distributed here.

On 17 July, road-verges in the vicinity of Clogheenmilcon Fen (**H4**, W62.75) near Blarney, yielded small populations of *Carex muricata* (Prickly Sedge), *Pimpinella major* (Greater Burnet-saxifrage) and naturalised *Malva sylvestris* (Common Mallow). The northwestern margin of the fen produced some large stands of the beautiful *Lysimachia vulgaris* (Yellow Loosestrife), a local paludal species in Co. Cork, and an addition to the flora of Clogheenmilcon fen. Another unexpected discovery on a grassy embankment beyond the eastern extremity of the fen (**H4**, W64.75), was a delightful flowering stand of *Origanum vulgare* (Marjoram), a native species of extremely localized occurrence in Co. Cork, despite the frequency of suitable calcareous habitats available for it. A long-naturalised population of *Ribes rubrum* (Red Currant) occurs on a rocky embankment in this area, while *Geranium lucidum* (Shining Crane's-bill) populations border the road-margin.

On 18 July, John O'Sullivan informed me by e-mail, that he had recently found a small population (some ten plants) of *Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid) in a quarry-site (i.e. Ballyhemiken (**H4**, W74.64)) near Rafeen, Cork Harbour. This is a welcome new location for this lovely mimic-orchid, which is of mostly rare occurrence in Co. Cork, and nowadays largely confined to calcareous coastal sites.

On 20 July, fieldwork in the vicinity of the River Funshion at Ballykenly Crossroads (**H5**, R75.07), near Glanworth village, allowed an update of my June 2002 find of the sedge hybrid, *Carex divulsa* (Grey Sedge) x *C. muricata* (Prickly Sedge). Satisfyingly, all three disjunct stands of this extremely rare sedge hybrid were refound within this 1-km square without difficulty, in addition to populations of both of its parents. At least two stands of the rose hybrid, *Rosa x suberecta* (*R. sherardii* x *R. rubiginosa*) were also found in this monad, while the eastern arm of the un-named crossroads (**H5**, R75.08) to the north of Ballykenly, produced a small population of *Ononis*

*repens* (Common Restharrow), an extremely localised species in *inland* Cork, where it is confined to calcareous (mostly carboniferous limestone) habitats; it was accompanied by *Galium verum* (Lady's Bedstraw) and *Knautia arvensis* (Field Scabious).

On 22 July, a spin along the picturesque coastal road from Kilbrittain to Timoleague (hectads **H3**, W5.4. & W4.4.) produced naturalised roadside hedgebank stands of the regal *Acanthus mollis* (Bear's-breeches) in the vicinity of Garranateen Strand (**H3**, W53.44) near Kilbrittain, and also along the eastern margin of the R600, south of Ballyhinaragh Bridge (Flaxford Strand) (**H3**, W51.44). Although this spectacular species is technically 'new' to the West Cork flora, it has been known to the author from this coastal area for a number of years.

On 12 August, a brief re-survey of the flora in the vicinity of Ballyphillip Crossroads (**H5**, W705.769), near Upper Glanmire village, Cork City, produced extensive naturalised stands of *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum* (Variegated Yellow Archangel) on the roadside embankment of its southern arm, together with a long established clonal stand of *Tanacetum vulgare* (Tansy). The hedgebanks on the northern arm of the crossroads (leading to Upper Glanmire village) yielded fruiting populations of cohabiting *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose), *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose), *Rosa* x *suberecta* (*R. sherardii* x *R. rubiginosa*), *Rosa corymbifera* (Hairy Dog-rose) and *Rosa canina* (Dog-rose), all of which were first recorded here in the 1980s.

On 14 August, botanical work was undertaken in the Kinsale area. Browns mills sea-inlet (**H4**, W64.52) produced small, roadside populations of *Mentha arvensis* (Corn Mint) (functionally-female plants), *Pimpinella major* (Greater Burnet-saxifrage), *Rosa arvensis* (Field Rose), *R. micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar), *R. sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose), *Carex divulsa* (Grey Sedge) and naturalised populations of *Melissa officinalis* (Lemon Balm) and *Lysimachia nummularia* (Creeping-jenny).

The main objective of this outing, was to collect fruiting vouchers of the nationally rare rose interspecific hybrid, *Rosa stylosa* (Short-styled Field-rose) x *R. arvensis* (Field-rose) (= *R. x pseudorusticana*), which I had found at nearby Ballinvard Crossroads (**H4**, W62.52) on 17 June 2011, where it cohabited with both of its parents. The beautiful umbellifer, *Pimpinella major*

(Greater Burnet-saxifrage) is of locally frequent occurrence in the Kinsale area on basic soils, and was now in delightful flower on grassy roadside-verges from the Brownsmills junction with the R606 (**H4**, W63.51) northwards along the main road to the T-junction at Knocknahilan (**H4**, W63.53) and thence westwards to Ballinvard Crossroads. The single, robust, fruiting bush of *Rosa* x *pseudorusticana* at this crossroads, now had new, first-year vegetative shoots on view, these having inherited their *purple-flushing* from their *R. arvensis* (Field-rose) parent, though the deltoid prickles were typical of its second parent, *Rosa stylosa* (Short-styled Field-rose). Most of the ellipsoid, hybrid hips were later found (on vertical-sectioning) to bear a high proportion of *abortive* achenes, though occasional hips were more fertile. The styles of the hybrid form a distinctive, tiered, elongate-ovoid head (as in *R. stylosa*), while the pedicels show an *admixture* of parental characters, these being *densely* stipitate-glandular (as in *Rosa arvensis*), but the stipitate-glands are stout and coarse, and up to 0.7 mm long, as in its *Rosa stylosa* parent. *Rosa* x *pseudorusticana* is, ostensibly, of very rare occurrence in Ireland, and only a handful of sites have been recorded for it to date. I have previously found this hybrid in East Cork (**H5**) (an old record, requiring updating) and Waterford (**H6**) (1995/2006), while the Waterford County Recorder, Paul Green, has recently found it in a second site in that county (Green, 2008).

After collecting vouchers of *Rosa* x *pseudorusticana* for later pressing at home, I then established that *Rosa arvensis* was of common occurrence in this general area, while *Rosa stylosa* (as scattered bushes) occurred, with diminishing frequency, westwards from Ballinvard Crossroads (**H4**, W62.52) to Ballynamona Crossroads (**H4**, W61.53) and Ballyregan Crossroads (**H4**, W61.54). Some cereal-fields on this roadway, presented a magnificent floral display of *Glebionis segetum* (Corn Marigold), unfortunately now an all-too-rare spectacle over much of Co. Cork, given the massive reduction in tillage in recent years. The highly fruit-sterile interspecific hybrid, *Potentilla anglica* (Trailing Tormentil) x *P. reptans* (Creeping Cinquefoil) (= *P. x mixta*) proved of locally frequent occurrence along road-margins in this general area.

On 27 August, a spin in the Coachford area (**H4**, W4.7) turned up a new location in this hectad for the visually attractive *Calystegia pulchra* (Hairy Bindweed), which clambered over shrubs on the road-bend (**H4**,

W426.732) overlooking the River Lee Reservoir at Oak Grove, Carrigadrohid. A subsequent anti-clockwise meander to Roove's Bridge (**H4**, W45.71) on the Lee Reservoir, produced long-established roadside clumps of *Geranium x oxonianum* (Druce's Crane's-bill) at the start of the minor road to Farran Wood Forestry Park, while occasional groves of *Prunus avium* (Wild Cherry) were present in nearby hedgebanks. Further along this road (**H4**, W47.71) some 3-4 flowering/fruited clumps of an agrimony taxon occurred by a field-gate, and collection of its fruits showed it to be *Agrimonia procera* (Fragrant Agrimony), a species widely scattered, but rather scarce, in Co. Cork. Populations of the very distinctive annual, *Veronica crista-galli* (Crested Field-speedwell) have been established along sections of this roadway for decades, as, for instance, at the cul-de-sac road-junction (**H4**, W479.709) subadjacent to Farran Wood.

On 31 August, the scenic Amenity Pedestrian Walkway (**H4**, W61.76. & W60.77) that runs from Blarney village north to Putland's Bridge, Waterloo, was visited with my wife Marie. This walkway is beautifully scenic, and flanks the right bank of the River Martin, while simultaneously providing a panoramic vista of the impressive *Quercus petraea* (Sessile Oak) woodland on the left bank of the river. Sadly, the maintenance of this amenity has been greatly neglected in recent years, and river-spate damage has not been repaired. A wind-borne, delicious *apple* scent, indicated that a member of the *Rosa rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) group was present in the area. Sure enough, a brief search established that the linear tree-screen planted between the pathway and the bordering roadway, contained naturalised (now fruiting) bushes of *Rosa rubiginosa* s. st. (Sweetbriar). Slightly further north, the margin of the impounded pond bore a flowering stand of the beautiful *Linaria vulgaris* (Yellow Toadflax), whose status here is dubious. Small populations of *Veronica crista-galli* (Crested Field-speedwell) are also established along the pathway margin.

On 18 September, a return visit was made to the Kinsale general area (**H4**, W6.5.), with the objective of undertaking further rose-work in the environs of Ballynamona Crossroads (**H4**, W61.53). The eastern arm of this crossroads produced an excellent find in two, disjunct, bushes of the interspecific rose cross, *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) x *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose), material being collected for later pressing as

vouchers. This appears to be an extremely rare Irish rose hybrid and, even in Co. Cork – where both parents possibly cohabit much more frequently than anywhere else in Ireland – it is only very rarely recorded. One of these two hybrid bushes grew adjacent to a bush of *Rosa stylosa* (Short-styled Field-rose).

The western (Dunderrow) arm of the nearby Ballyvrin Crossroads (**H4**, W60.53) produced an excellent hedgebank population of fruiting *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose), accompanied by a naturalised flowering stand of *Mentha suaveolens* (Round-leaved Mint). A further *Rosa sherardii* hedgebank population was found on the northern arm of this crossroads, while its southern arm displayed a few naturalised clumps of flowering *Geranium x oxonianum* (Druce's Crane's-bill). Fruiting *Rosa micrantha* was locally frequent in the roadway hedgebanks here, while cut, rectangular cornfields were delightfully framed with flowering *Pimpinella major* (Greater Burnet-saxifrage).

On 27 September, an impromptu afternoon trip was made to the River Sullane, at Sullane Bridge (**H3**, W26.74), shortly to the west of Macroom town. The prime objective was to try and gain a better idea of the distribution of *Rosa caesia* subsp. *vosagiaca* (Glaucous Dog-rose) at this site, one of only a handful of known locations for it in southern Ireland. In the event, this rose was found to occur as scattered bushes on *both* banks, downriver of Sullane Bridge, in 1-km square, (**H3**, W26.74). Considerable fieldwork will be required in future years, in order to work out its factual distribution and frequency in this general area. It was satisfying to find *Geum rivale* (Water Avens) growing in some abundance and luxuriance, along the banks of the River Sullane, below Sullane Bridge, as this species is of very rare occurrence in neighbouring Mid Cork and East Cork.

On 16 October, a fortuitous botanical stop at Farlistown Crossroads (**H4**, W598.576) (while en route to the Kinsale area) turned up two roadside clonal stands of *Trifolium medium* (Zigzag Clover): one literally at the crossroads, the other a short distance southwest, in the same 1-km square. For no obvious reason, Zigzag Clover is of extremely local occurrence in Co. Cork, being virtually confined to East Cork, where, in the present era, it is *not* associated with any semi-natural type of habitat, but rather is confined to hedgebanks and road-margins, with the occasional occurrence on disused

railway lines. Much the same rarity and ecological trend is evident in Co. Waterford (Green, 2008). In stark contrast, this beautiful, rhizomatous (often extensively spreading) clover is present in more natural habitats in Co. Limerick (**H8**) “...where, in June 2005, I found it in damp grassland on the Mullagh limestones (**H8**, R28.47). I hope, in 2013, to recheck and update all of my Co. Cork records for *Trifolium medium*.”

Small roadside hedgebank populations of *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard’s Downy-rose) are present on the northern arm of Farlistown Crossroads, and are also locally frequent along its southern arm, together with occasional bushes of *Rosa micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar) and *Rosa arvensis* (Field-rose). Colourful colonies of intermixed *Potentilla anglica* (Trailing Tormantil) and its interspecific hybrid, *Potentilla anglica* x *P. erecta* (Tormantil) (= *P. x suberecta*) are present here in local abundance, and liven up the hedgebanks.

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### Recording in Waterford (H6), 2012

Paul R. Green, *Yoletown, Ballycullane, New Ross, Co. Wexford*  
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My first visit of the year into the county was on 28 January. Getting lost at Ballyduff (S49.09), proved worthwhile as I found several clumps of *Iris foetidissima* (Stinking Iris) on a road bank; new for the hectad.

The 14 April took me over to the west of Dungarvan to lead two two hour walks showing the public edible plants to be found growing in Colligan



Wood. After I did a little recording at Giddane Beg (X25.95), where I had one clump of *Polystichum aculeatum* (Hard Shield-fern). The fourth site for this fern in the county.

On my way to Cork on 18 May I stopped at Dungarvan (X26.93) for a break. On a wall was one *Gnaphalium luteoalbum* (Jersey Cudweed). It looks as though this cudweed is becoming established about the town. I paid a visit to Megan Morris on my return journey on 20 May. We had *Eleogiton fluitans* (Floating Club-rush) in a newly dug drain on the side of a track at Dunmoon (X04.90); this is the first record for this species in the county west of Dungarvan. I stopped at Ardmore (X19.77) the following day to give some conservation advice to the locals. While there I had a good walk about. The first good find were four plants of *Anthriscus caucalis* (Bur Chervil) growing on the edge of the pavement. This is the second county record and first since 1971. With the Bur Chervil was one *Helminthotheca echioides* (Bristly Oxtongue). On seeing *Veronica montana* (Wood Speedwell) in a small area of trees which I had often visited, I knew it was going to be a new hectad record on checking my database. *Valerianella locusta* (Common Cornsalad) was abundant on a road bank and nearby on a wall was *V. carinata* (Keeled-fruited Cornsalad). I made my way across a rough field to a pink patch, this turned out to be *Bergenia x schmidtii*; a new county record.

On a very wet day on the 12 July I took the Waterford Youth Group for a walk around Crough Wood (S32.06) to look at edible plants. Afterwards I visited the ruins of Mahon Mill (S33.06). Here was the largest stand of *Mentha suaveolens* (Round-leaved Mint) I have ever seen; it covered the whole field. The grazing flock of sheep obviously had a dislike to mint! A single plant of *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* (Corky-fruited Water-dropwort) was in the entrance to the field. A very unexpected new county record. I next headed for Waterford Airport (S63.05), as Ros Thompson had sent me a photo of *Parentucellia viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia) (see photo on page 40) she had taken in 2009 on the verge of the newly widened road to serve the airport. To my surprise it was still there. Looking at Ros's photos, I concluded the Yellow Bartsia is likely to have been introduced with a grass seed mix here as there were also Cornflowers in the picture. This is the second county record and first since 1880. I finished the day with a visit to Dunmore East (S68.00) to see *Geranium x oxonianum* (Druce's Crane's-bill) which Declan McGrath had found a few days earlier.

Megan Morris was kind enough to visit Cappoquin House (X10.99) on the 14 August for me, to check out an *Epipactis* reported from the garden by Charles Nelson in 2010. The three plants were in full flower, they were *E. helleborine* (Broad-leaved Helleborine); new for the hectad. Megan explained

to the gardener what they were and asked him not to spray them.

On the 2 October I took a visit to marshy fields that I had not visited before on the west side of the reclaimed Waterford rubbish dump (S59.09). Rita Canney had asked me to take a look at *Comarum palustris* (Marsh Cinquefoil) she had found there in 2011. This was a new tetrad record and certainly an area worth visiting at an earlier time of year. I also took a walk around the newly made reclamation area. *Helminthotheca echioides* (Bristly Oxtongue) was there in the thousands, a remarkable sight. Next I went to have a look at a *Conyza* Mark Roper had seen growing on the seawall along the back of the Back Strand, Tramore (S60.02). This was *Conyza floribunda* (Bilbao's Fleabane), an increasing alien in the county. While here I decided to collect some of the *Spartina*, as since I last visited the site (S61.02) in 2006 it has been at the back of my mind that it was not *Spartina anglica* (Common Cord-grass). I sent some to Dr Cope the BSBI referee; in his reply he said it was *Spartina x townsendii*, a hybrid I had been led to believe does no longer occur in Ireland.

Even though I did not visit the county much in 2012 there certainly were some very worthwhile records collected. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Michael Bride, Rita Canney, Zoë Devlin, Úna McDermott, Declan McGrath, Megan Morris, Paula O'Meara and Mark Roper for sending me records.

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### **Recording in Wexford (H12), 2012**

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2012 has been an exceptionally busy year in the county, as on average I only spent 8 days a month at home. The flow of records has been well above the planned 20,000. This was helped with giving advice to BSBI and non-BSBI members on MapMate. By the end of the year 29,456 records had been entered into my MapMate for 2012. These came in via e-mail, excel spreadsheets, MapMate syncs, paper recording cards, phone calls, text messages and word of mouth. One out of three records was made by others than myself. I also received many photos to help with identification as well as a few specimens to cast my eyes over. In exchange for the records received I try and tell the active recorders in the county of any of the good native finds I make.

I have started to computerise records from literature for the county. I am very grateful for Paula O'Meara for searching place names on old maps and the internet so that records can be assigned at least a hectad. Jim Hurley was kind enough to supply a species list from the 1980s for the Keeragh Islands, the only records in my database for these islands. I checked my database for errors and duplicated records, over 20,000 records were deleted or edited. After the corrections by the close of 2012 my MapMate holds 148,916 records for the county.

The year was kicked off on 27 January when I found *Allium cepa* (Onion) on waste ground in New Ross (S71.27). This was one of 24 new county records (NCR) in 2012. Of these, only one was native: A hybrid marsh-orchid – *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* x *kerriensis* from a marsh at Ballinesker (T11.28).

Paula O'Meara found the second new county record of the year on 11 March; two clumps of *Lysichiton americanus* (American Skunk-cabbage) on the bank of a drainage dyke, escaped from Kilmokee House (S68.16). Paula also had a number of other non-native species from waste ground-abandoned building sites at Campile: *Nerine bowdenii* and *Begonia semperflorens* (Wax Begonia) on the south side (S72.15) of the village and from the north side (S73.16) *Allium schoenoprasum* (Chives) and *Oxalis tetraphylla* (Four-leaved Pink-sorrel), all of which I took a look at. At St Mary's, Rosslare GAA grounds at Tagoat (T09.11) Paula found a large stand of *Gnaphalium luteoalbum* (Jersey Cudweed). Her best find of the year must be *Valerianella dentata* (Narrow-fruited Cornsalad) (see photo on page 38) from the disused railway line at Campile. Roy Watson and Frankie Tennant found two strands of *Cuscuta epithymum* (Dodder) on the dunes at Chour (T09.04), the first reported county record since 1992. Their *Vulpia fasciculata* (Dune Fescue) here fills in a gap for this species along the south Wexford coast. *Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid) on the edge of the parking area on the edge of the dunes at Tilladavin (T03.05) was a new site for this orchid as was their *Trifolium scabrum* (Rough Clover) on the bare track nearby. *Allium ampeloprasum* var. *ampeloprasum* is found at several sites on road banks and verges at Carrick (T10), Zoë Devlin was kind enough to give me map references for the sites, and embarrassed her daughter, by asking at the post office in the village if it could be possible to arrange to stop having the road bank from being cut

where the *Allium* was growing. The post mistress was on Zoë's side and made all the arrangements. After all the efforts to protect this *Allium* somebody came along and picked the flower heads. Mary Foley reported *Helminthotheca echiioides* (Bristly Oxtongue) from Crosstown Cemetery (T0423), a species that has become very common in the southern half of the county in the last few years.

While driving along near the county border on the 23 April at Drumderry (S89.59) a patch of *Geum rivale* (Water Avens) was spotted, a new site, and the first county record since 1972. One spike of *Orchis mascula* (Early-purple Orchid) was also on the road bank. The following day a visit to a disturbed corner of a field at Busherstown (S89.11) turned up the county's most visited plant of the year, *Lamium confertum* (Northern Dead-nettle). Last reported from the county in 1995 by Ro FitzGerald. Here also for good comparison were *L. hybridum* (Cut-leaved Dead-nettle) and *L. purpureum* (Red Dead-nettle). Just up the road a garden was covered in *Ranunculus parviflorus* (Small-flowered Buttercup), and on a road verge a *Paeonia officinalis* (Garden Peony) was in full flower and at the base of a ditch was a fine clump of *Dracunculus vulgaris* (Dragon Arum), both NCR. I went and had a look for *Rubus spectabilis* (Salmonberry) on the 22 May along a wooded stream below Dunbrody Country House Hotel (S72.10), found here in 1993 by Ro FitzGerald and John Akeroyd. Very easy to find! But rather alarming as it was extremely well established in a number of woods in the area. On a roadside wall by where I had parked the car were nine clumps of *Sedum dasyphyllum* (Thick-leaved Stonecrop) a NCR. A month later I noticed *Echium vulgare* (Viper's-bugloss) growing on a heap of soil in a small field at Rocksborough (T05.18), I stopped to take a look and found there was also a single plant of *Anethum graveolens* (Dill), a NCR.

A visit to a working sandpit to see *Clinopodium acinos* (Basil Thyme) at Drumderry (S90.58) on 4 June proved to be a very rewarding morning. A large clump of *Cladium mariscus* (Great Fen-sedge) was an unexpected surprise in a wet corner. Here it grew with *Eleogiton fluitans* (Floating Club-rush) and *Carex vesicaria* (Bladder-sedge). The bare open dry sandy areas were covered in large quantities of *Echium vulgare*, *Erigeron acris* (Blue Fleabane), *Filago minima* (Small Cudweed), *F. vulgaris* (Common Cudweed) and *Sanguisorba minor* subsp. *minor* (Salad Burnet); all rare species in the

county.

On the 1 July Megan Morris took me to see a pear she had found in a hedge near a farm at Moddybeg (S89.21). After much debate and another visit later in the year I came to the conclusion it was *Pyrus pyraster* (Wild Pear). What was remarkable about this pear was that there were dozens of young trees, many over a metre tall. It was not easy to tell whether these were suckers or had arisen from seed. Seán Meehan joined me for a walk along the coast at Courtown (T20.56) the next day. Our first surprise was *Artemisia stelleriana* (Hoary Mugwort) self-sown on the harbour walls in several places, a NCR. Along the seafront we had *Hordeum murinum* (Wall Barley); the first reported record here since 1965. Our best record was two patches of *Trifolium ornithopodioides* (Bird's-foot Clover) on an area of mown grass. This site is 50 kilometres north of the nearest county site at St Helen's.

Dominic Berridge and I led a walk on 14 July for the Wexford Naturalist's Field Club at Johnstown Castle (T01.16) gardens looking at invasive species. We had a good look at a number of the species that had become naturalised on the garden walls including *Berberis aggregata* (Clustered Barberry), a NCR. *Oxalis stricta* (Upright Yellow-sorrel) and *Selaginella kraussiana* (Krauss's Clubmoss) are both well naturalised in the lawns.

Zoë Devlin showed me *Veronica agrestis* (Green Field-speedwell) in her garden on the 13 August, a species I had not seen in the county before. While out with Jackie O'Connell, Pete and Zoë that day at Rostonstown (T08.05) we stopped at a large yellow patch in a roadside ditch. This turned out to be *Lysimachia vulgaris* (Yellow Loosestrife), the first reported county record since 1990. Two days later came, the surprise of the year as I drove past two large patches of *Betonica officinalis* (Betony) at Wellingtonbridge (S85.13) on a steep heathy wooded bank, a road I had driven along many times in the last couple years. Several hundred plants were in full flower. This could be the site found by W. MacMillan (Colgan & Scully, 1898), near the head of Bannow Bay. The head of Bannow Bay which is less than a kilometre away. The only other extant site in the county is down to seven plants.

On my way to Dublin on 17 August I made an early morning stop at Hollyfort (T12.64) as Janet Whelehan wanted to show me *Campanula trachelium* (Nettle-leaved Bellflower) growing on the roadside, found here the

previous year by Deborah Darcy. There were four plants, two had white flowers. Even though I would like to say it is native, I think it is more than likely to be a garden escape. A visit to the site on the 23 September to see if I could find anymore bellflower along the nearby Bann River was unsuccessful. Several patches of *Mimulus moschatus* (Musk) were in a field on the bank of the river, a NCR. Keeping the Musk company was a profusion of *Mimulus guttatus* (Monkeyflower). As I walked through the field I kept tapping all the fruiting heads to see if they rattled. This kept me amused for a while and was a good way to see if the plant was fertile.

Jim Hurley kindly arranged permission from Patrick and Liezel Gratton-Bellow the owners of Saltee Island Little (see photo 2 on page 2) for a small group to visit on 15 September. Before we started the job of recording Patrick showed us one of the rooms of his house. As it was a little on the damp side, eight species of fern had made the walls of the room home. There were several clumps of *Asplenium marinum* (Sea Spleenwort), a fern that proved to be common on the sea-cliffs. It was the only place we saw *A. scolopendrium* (Hart's-tongue). We settled down to freshly brewed tea and coffee provided by Liezel and a homemade rhubarb pie that Rose Hurley (see photo 1 on page 2) had brought across. *Erodium maritimum* (Sea Stork's-bill) was plentiful in many places in the short turf along the cliff-top edge. *Lemna minuta* (Least Duckweed) was found in several of the small marshy areas. We had a list of the 81 species Ro FitzGerald recorded in 1990 to work with. We could not find 16 of these. An additional 42 species were added to the list. The group worked well as a team, as each member found at least one species not seen by anyone else. There were many seals and their pups to be seen in the coves. A big distraction to some of the group. A very enjoyable day was had by all.

Other NCRs recorded by the author unless stated, not mentioned above are: *Vinca difformis* (Intermediate Periwinkle) – large patch on road bank, Ballyhackbeg (S81.12); *Persicaria amplexicaulis* (Red Bistort) – patch on field bank, Cushenstown (S77.25), Paula O'Meara; *Oxalis exilis* (Least Yellow-sorrel) – large patch on mown verge, Kilcarby (S97.36); *Helleborus foetidus* (Stinking Hellebore) – one on waste ground, Strandfield (T05.19); *Aster x salignus* – bank of River Slaney, Ballyhoge (S97.30); *Jasminum nudiflorum* (Winter Jasmine) – wall of ruin, Ballyhoge (S98.29); *Pulmonaria officinalis* (Lungwort) – waste ground, Aughermon (S90.15); *Cotoneaster*

*salicifolius* (Willow-leaved Cotoneaster) – one bush on waste ground, Wexford (T05.21), det. J. Fryer.

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### Some notes from Co. Offaly (H18), 2012

Fiona Devery, *Emmet St., Birr, Co. Offaly*

A trip to the callows at Lusmagh with Stephen Heery and the Offaly Naturalists Field Club (ONFC) produced the usual flora including *Stellaria palustris* (Marsh Stitchwort), *Thalictrum flavum* (Common Meadow-rue), *Dactylorhiza incarnata* (Early Marsh-orchid), *D. fuchsii* (Common Spotted-orchid), *Orchis mascula* (Early-purple Orchid) and surprisingly, on the drier area, *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid). This habitat for *A. morio* was shown to us previously by Stephen but this was a new site record.

A return trip to the *A. morio* area of the callows gave a new record for *Carex pallescens* (Pale Sedge), only the fourth record for Offaly.

*C. spicata* (Spiked Sedge), was found in three new areas. A visit for the Tidy Towns group to Tubber found not only a fine display of *D. fuchsii* on the roadside bank but also a clump of *C. spicata* and *Galium alba* (Hedge Bedstraw).

A trip with John Feehan for the ONFC Summer School to Ferbane, to study grasses, produced a record for *C. spicata* on the roadside at Kenny's quarry. While checking Loughnane's old sand quarry (a major site for *Anthyllis vulneraria* (Kidney Vetch)) in Birr prior to a visit of the National Biodiversity Record Centre to record butterflies and bumblebees, another clump of *C. spicata* was recorded.

Loughnane's sandpit also had a huge number of rosettes of the now familiar plant, *E. annuus* (Tall Fleabane), growing on rubble. Several hundred flowering spikes appeared later in the summer and also a few *Conyza* (these *Conyza* look different and need to be verified). A visit to Coneycarn Pit, Glaster, Birr produced the same rosettes and also some *Conyza* rosettes, both of which were confirmed later in the year. The sand quarry at Lusmagh showed the same pattern of *Conyza* spp. and *E. annuus*. Is the Port Tunnel which was built using sand from these quarries the connection? The 2011

record for *Conyza* from Banagher, outside Banagher Concrete's main office adds strength to the theory.

A visit to a farm near Clonmacnoise to see *Spiranthes spiralis* (Autumn Lady's-tresses), in August rounded off the main recording year very nicely.

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### **Field meeting reports, 2012**

#### **Scraghy, Co. Tyrone (H36) & Lettercran, E. Donegal (H34) 9 & 10 June**

This was a meeting to explore interesting ground on the borderlands of Tyrone and Donegal, where alternating bands of Carboniferous Sandstone and Limestone give an excellent variety of habitat.

Six members met on a roadside lay-by opposite the extensive (but disused) limestone quarry at Scraghy. Soon after starting off, we spotted *Salix x rubra* (*S. purpurea* x *S. viminalis*) (Green-leaved Willow) by the roadside. Just W of the road the ground falls away steeply, and two parallel ribs of Sandstone rocks run across this steep slope, creating an outstanding botanical site. Here we were pleased to find many flowering heads of *Pseudorchis albida* (Small White-orchid). In the 1980s, we had three sites for this orchid in Tyrone, but more recently it has been known only from this Scraghy site. *Neottia ovata* (Common Twayblade) was frequent. *Coeloglossum viride* (Frog Orchid) is known to be abundant here, but we didn't see it – probably just a little early for it. In spite of a thorough search, we also failed to find *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort), found here in 2011. But we did re-find *Hymenophyllum wilsonii* (Wilson's Filmy-fern). *Carex pallescens* (Pale Sedge) was frequent.

We then moved a few hundred metres to Crockalaghta, S of the Scraghy quarries. This is a domed hill that has missed any agricultural development, such as ploughing or fertilising, for many years. Recently it was designated as an ASSI by the N Ireland Environmental Agency. However, the vegetation consisted mostly of poor mountain grasses, and at first glance it looked unpromising. But eventually it yielded *Eleocharis quinqueflora* (Few-flowered Spike-rush) and one outstanding plant in *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subspp. *coccinea* (an Early Marsh-orchid).

The next stop was about 1km to the W at a spot called Cushey's Bridge. The stream under the bridge runs through botanically-rich flushed



ground. This habitat merges into bog away from the stream. Good plants here on the roadside, by the stream or on the bogland included:

*Avenula pubescens* (Downy Oat-grass)  
*Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel)  
*Pinguicula vulgaris* (Common Butterwort)  
*P. lusitanica* (Pale Butterwort)  
*Platanthera bifolia* (Lesser Butterfly-orchid)  
*Dactylorhiza purpurella* (Northern Marsh-orchid)  
*D. purpurella* x *D. maculata* (Heath-spotted Orchid)  
*Schoenus nigricans* (Black Bog-rush)  
*Carex dioica* (Dioecious Sedge)  
*C. limosa* (Bog Sedge)

*Schoenus nigricans* is worth commenting on. We know it from only two other sites in Tyrone. It is much more abundant in neighbouring Co Donegal.

We then drove 3 or 4km in a WSW direction over the N Ireland/Republic of Ireland border to the townland of Lettercran in Co Donegal. Here a river tumbling down from high ground to the N runs through a maze of limestone caves, overhangs and cliffs, and provides a very exciting piece of natural scenery. The only plant of note around these limestone features is *Cystopteris fragilis* (Brittle Bladder-fern).

Upstream from here, a lane runs beside the river for a kilometre or so, making for a delightful walk. *Avenula pubescens* (Downy Oat-grass) grew by the roadside, *Allium ursinum* (Ramsons) along the tumbling river, and there were handsome stands of *Osmunda regalis* (Royal Fern) along more placid stretches of river. *Carex vesicaria* (Bladder Sedge) grew in marshy ground near the river.

A small gate tempted us to go through and explore, and we found ourselves in a series of little marshy fields with a beautiful show of orchids – *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted-orchid), *D. maculata* (Heath Spotted-orchid), *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly-orchid). Here also were *Carex pallescens* (Pale Sedge) and *C. caryophyllea* (Spring Sedge). We were surprised later to discover that the three sedges, *C. vesicaria*, *C. pallescens* and *C. caryophyllea* were all new to hectad H17.

Back into Co Tyrone, we made a final call at a rocky site about 2km N of Scraghy to see *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense* (Tunbridge Filmy-Fern) in one of only two sites in Tyrone.

Altogether a fine day's botanising. I would like to thank the many

landowners we had approached for access, all of whom were most willing to allow us on their land. And thanks also to the authorities at Lettercran Catholic Church, who very kindly allowed us access to their toilet and washing facilities.

Ian McNeill

### **Rathlin Island, Co. Antrim (H39), 29 June – 1 July**

Six people smiled patiently as I arrived at Ballycastle ferry terminal, weighed down with groceries, walking boots and waterproofs. Our 3-day trip to Rathlin had been long in the planning, and it was with a sense of anticipation that we shook hands and everyone was introduced. Joining me for the weekend were Sylvia and Julian Reynolds from Dublin, Mary and David Willis from Sligo, Margaret Marshall from Belfast and John Street from Bedfordshire. Guillemots skimmed over Rathlin Sound as the ferry navigated its smooth crossing. The dark basalt cliffs at the southern tip of the island contrasted with the white chalk west of Church Bay as we took in the views and wondered what lay in store. As we disembarked, we were greeted by our friendly island hosts. Four people plus all the food were transported to a small 2-bedroom house which was to serve as our base for the weekend. John and I checked in at a nearby hostel, while Margaret had opted for the Manor House. Before long, with everything unpacked and our sandwiches made, the botany could begin.

The target on our first day was a National Trust property called Ballyconagan, situated on the north coast of the island only a short walk from our accommodation. Colourful roadside fields and hedges lined our way as we passed the tiny island school and the chapel where a stream gushed inside the boundary wall. As we turned into the lane towards Ballyconagan we were amused to see a display board alerting visitors to the delights which awaited them, including an orchid photograph straight out of the florist's shop. Immediately over the stile, the rock outcrops and dry grassland yielded species such as *Ulex gallii* (Western Gorse), *Rosa spinosissima* (Burnet Rose) and *Koeleria macrantha* (Crested Hair-grass). After passing warily through a cattle-grazed field, *Huperzia selago* (Fir Clubmoss) and *Juncus squarrosus* (Heath Rush) marked a change of habitat. The group spread out to survey a little lake and neighbouring wet heath. Prolific *Eleocharis multicaulis* (Many-stalked Spike-rush), a little *Empetrum nigrum* (Crowberry) and a small patch of *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting) were seen. As the ground rose again towards the cliffs, *Avenula pubescens* (Downy Oat-grass) and more

frequent *Antennaria dioica* appeared. However, with rain threatening, we took cover in an old coastguard hut with wide views of the northern sea-cliffs. A previous visitor had been inspired to write a haiku on a scrap of paper. We were content to shelter from the elements and chat over lunch.

With rain now falling heavily, we picked our way carefully to a line of cliffs immediately below the coastguard hut, and were rewarded by seeing numerous clumps of *Sedum rosea* (Roseroot). This species is exceedingly rare in the county and the grid reference for this site will be a welcome addition to the Rare Plants Register. A cliff-top flush to the east harboured *Schoenus nigricans* (Black Bog-rush), *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly-orchid), *Pedicularis palustris* (Marsh Lousewort), and more significantly a small population of *Baldellia ranunculoides* (Lesser Water-plantain) spotted by Julian. Away from the south of the county, there are only two unlocalised records for this species, a nineteenth century record from Rathlin and a more recent one from the Ballycastle hectad, so it is very satisfying to be able to pinpoint this site. South-west of the coastguard hut lies Loughaltachuille (see photo 6 on page 2). At the eastern end of this lough, we were delighted to find a beautiful display of *Parnassia palustris* (Grass-of-Parnassus), accompanied by *Platanthera bifolia* (Lesser Butterfly-orchid), *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel), *Selaginella selaginoides* (Lesser Clubmoss) *Carex dioica* (Dioecious Sedge) and *Triglochin palustris* (Marsh Arrowgrass). Returning inland, we lingered at some small lakelets where the most significant record was of *Carex diandra* (Lesser Tussock-Sedge). Ballyconagan had provided us with a rich mosaic of different habitats and quite a few identifications to check in the evening. With steam still rising from our discarded wet socks and coats, we were soon tucking into a choice of two casseroles. Sylvia dragged me away from the lively after-dinner conversation to ensure that all our botanical specimens of the day were named.

Saturday morning began with communal porridge and a discussion of porridge lore. For a short while we transformed into normal tourists, bumping along in the puffin bus to the famous bird sanctuary at the westerly Bull Point Lighthouse. As we disembarked we were greeted by two RSPB volunteers, one dressed in a puffin costume and the other bizarrely attired in a chicken outfit. Steep steps brought us down to the viewing platform at the lighthouse, where the RSPB volunteers provided us with fantastic binoculars, telescopes and spectacular views of kittiwakes, fulmars, guillemots, razorbills and the comical puffins. Reconstituted as a BSBI field trip, we explored part of the Kebble nature reserve at the western end of the island. Damp fields yielded *Platanthera bifolia* again whilst abundant *Carex limosa* (Bog-Sedge) was discovered at the edge of a large marshy area. However, deteriorating weather

forced us to retreat to drier ground. A low rock outcrop between the road and the southern cliffs was home to *Sedum anglicum* (English Stonecrop), the seed-heads of *Scilla verna* (Spring Squill) and the very rare *Sagina subulata* (Heath Pearlwort) whose flowers refused to open in the rain. We ate our sandwiches on a comparatively dry bank and explored a path down the cliff and associated winch-gear.

Immediately after lunch we moved onto a steep grassy boulder-studded slope with an excellent flora including the early-flowering Rathlin speciality *Ajuga pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Bugle), just about discernible on the last day of June. Apart from Rathlin, this species is only known in Ireland from the limestone of Counties Clare and Galway. The *Ajuga* was accompanied by *Agrimonia eupatoria* (Agrimony), *Avenula pubescens* and *Daucus carota* (Wild Carrot). The long walk back to our accommodation took us past a roadside *Ajuga pyramidalis* site, banks of *Trifolium medium* (Zigzag Clover), meadows full of *Gymnadenia borealis* (Heath Fragrant-orchid), *Platanthera chlorantha* and *Pulicaria dysenterica* (Common Fleabane), a rock scarp with *Orobanche alba* (Thyme Broomrape), and a large patch of *Inula helenium* (Elecampane) at the entrance to a field.

Dinner was booked in the Manor House restaurant, a welcome prospect at the end of a long day. Suitably cleaned up and dried out, we took our seats and studied the seafood options on the menu. One of our party, with skill to rival that of Sherlock Holmes, identified a table of sailors from their craggy features. I hoped that the conversation wouldn't be overheard and was relieved when our food arrived. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed their meal, especially those who had stewed gooseberry as an accompaniment. Afterwards, we retired to the comfortable lounge next door and continued to chat until Sylvia reminded me that we had plants to identify.

Sunday morning dawned damp and overcast. Lunch made, bags packed and porridge eaten, we set out along the road to the southern arm of the island. Stone walls separated the little fields and reed-fringed lakes lay both to left and right. However we didn't leave the road until a signpost marking the RSPB Roonivoolin walk. Immediately through the gate, we were able to explore a length of lakeshore alongside the track with *Nuphar lutea* (Yellow Water-lily) and *Potamopyrgus jenkinsi* (Jenkins' Spire Snail), fished out by Julian in response to a (spurious) claim that this species hadn't been recorded on Rathlin. Slightly further on, we passed the northern tip of Ushet Lough where *Littorella uniflora* (Shoreweed) grew under the water and *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel) crept along the shore. At this point, Mary and David had to leave us, although they were to see us again.

My mistrust of cattle was now exposed, as I abandoned my colleagues

and made a mad dash through the livestock to the sea-cliffs. Behind the safety of the fence, I looked back to see the others sauntering calmly towards me. Suddenly we were bathed in sunlight, at long last able to properly enjoy the spectacular cliff-edge scenery. The turf was dry enough for us to sit down and look out over the bluest of seas as we took our morning coffee.

A steep path gave access to the boulder beach below. Working along the shore, we came to a large, beautifully camouflaged plant of *Mertensia maritima* (Oysterplant), which was admired and photographed by all (see photo 5 on page 2). Four other plants grew nearby along with a couple of seedlings. Also in the vicinity was a strong colony of *Ligusticum scoticum* (Scots Lovage) (see photo 4 on page 2). Both of these rare species had previously been recorded from Rathlin but detailed localities were not known. *Agrimonia eupatoria* decorated the grassy slopes below the basalt cliffs and *Asplenium marinum* (Sea Spleenwort) grew under one overhang. Our shoreline antics were a source of some entertainment on board the Rathlin ferry. David and Mary thought the five figures looked strangely familiar but kept their suspicions to themselves. Such a pity they had to return to Sligo for the evening.

Having returned to the cliff-top, we got into conversation with two RSPB volunteers who were carrying out a chough survey. This red-billed and red-footed member of the crow family loves to feed in the short turf of the cliff-edge, but was off elsewhere during our visit. As compensation, we lay down to admire the open flowers of *Sagina subulata* and saw *Orobanche alba* and *Scilla verna* again. Our route from the cliffs back to the road took us past a lot of *Antennaria dioica*. Rathlin is the headquarters of this threatened plant in County Antrim.

The road brought us to the southern tip of the island and to some ruins from the former kelp industry at the sea's edge. We sat on the rocks and enjoyed our lunch with poolside views of swimming seals and eider ducks. It was hard to leave the sunbathing seals, but we had a boat to catch. On the way back, Margaret spotted a little roadside *Convolvulus arvensis* (Field Bindweed), possibly a first record for Rathlin.

Our hosts helped us transport our bags back to the ferry, and we were soon on our way, looking back wistfully at the island which had worn a mask for two days and then appeared in its full stunning beauty on our last day. John was planning to stay in Ballycastle for another night. Everyone else slowly dispersed, carrying with them great memories of our few days together. I had been educated about opera, literature, the Georgian Society, philosophy, ornithology and conchology, but the botany still managed to be centre-stage. Julian modestly contributed the following limerick.

*We found wonderful plants by the coast  
On Rathlin, the trip with the most.  
But the best, near the edge  
Of a swamp full of sedge  
Was Baldellia, I hasten to boast!*

A second limerick discovered on a scrap of paper (presumably written by a disgruntled member!) read as follows:

*On Rathlin we stayed in a palace  
But the leader, contorted with malice,  
Must be mad in the head,  
For some scraps, clearly dead,  
He named *Ajuga pyramidalis*.*

I would like to thank John Street for taking the photographs.

David McNeill

### **The Long Derries, Edenderry, Co. Offaly (H18), 14 July**

A large group of BSBI members and the Offaly Naturalists Field Club (ONFC) met in Edenderry on the 14 July to visit the Long Derries. The site consists of a series of disused sand quarries and a Bord na Mona rail line which juts out into the bog. The Long Derries is a SAC and has a large population of *Clinopodium acinos* (Basil Thyme), which was in full flower on the day and looked wonderful against the grey background of the sand. *Erigeron acris* (Blue Fleabane), while not in full bloom was plentiful, *Erigeron annuus* (Tall Fleabane) was down in numbers from a previous visit and *Conyza canadensis* (Canadian Fleabane) was not seen on the day. *Leontodon hispidus* (Rough Hawbit), *Minuartia hybrida* (Fine-leaved Sandwort), *Carduus crispus* (Wetted Thistle), *Blackstonia perfoliata* (Yellowwort), *Reseda lutea* (Wild Mignonette), and *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting), were all recorded. *Arabis hirsuta* (Hairy Rock-cress), was also found, a new record for this site. After lunch the group walked out to a small island surrounded by bog and this produced some fine spikes of *Coeloglossum viridis* (Frog Orchid), to the delight of the photographers in the group.

Fiona Devery

## Hook Head, Co. Wexford, (H12), 15 July

We might have known it would be a damp outing – it was, after all, St Swithin's Day! However, hopes were high for a good day's botanising with Paul Green and we weren't disappointed.

We met at Hook Head Visitor's Centre – Paul Green, Paula O'Meara, Úna McDermott, Jim Hurley and myself, Zoë Devlin. We left the cars at the Centre's car park and headed towards the fossil-laden rocks and cliffs (see photo 3 on page 2) to see what was to be found, botanically speaking. Flowering among the rocks were *Inula crithmoides* (Golden-samphire), *Limonium binervosum* (Rock Sea-lavender) and *Spergularia rupicola* (Rock Sea-spurrey). Further along the cliff-tops we found *Scorzoneroides autumnalis* (Autumn Hawkbit), *Convolvulus arvensis* (Field Bindweed) and, on an old wall, *Cerastium diffusum* (Sea Mouse-ear). The habitat was mixed, some sandy patches, some arable, some coastal grassland, but all of it constantly lashed by the wind and sea-spray. We enjoyed the brisk sea 'breeze' and looked out to sea for signs of cetaceous bodies but none were on view on this particular day. Heading back towards the car park and 'sandwich-time' we stopped to look at *Sinapis alba* (White Mustard), *Epilobium parviflorum* (Hoary Willowherb), *Vicia hirsuta* (Hairy Tare) and *Trifolium dubium* (Lesser Trefoil) among others. We had hoped to find *Kickxia elatine* (Sharp-leaved Fluellen) in a field next to the Hook Head Centre, but there was no sign of it. Perhaps it was too early in the year.

After lunch, we drove to the little harbour of Slade. This harbour was built to accommodate the need for coal which was imported from Wales in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and was necessary for the functioning of the lighthouse at Hook Head, two miles away. First species we found – or rather Paul pointed out to us – was *Erodium maritimum* (Sea Stork's-bill) and he also drew our attention to *Lepidium coronopus* (Swine-cress). We left the cars by the harbour and headed up an old track to see a species which had intrigued the writer earlier in the year. Paul identified it as *Delairea odorata* (German-ivy), an introduced species, native to S. Africa. Further along the track we saw *Pastinaca sativa* subsp. *sylvestris* (Wild Parsnip). Over a brambly hedge, was a large natural pond and Paul, Paula and Jim volunteered to see what was growing in it. Úna and I decided to stay put and watch the herd of cattle in the field instead, giving warning to our colleagues should the bull decide to come too close for comfort. The carpet of white on the pond was identified as *Ranunculus baudotii* (Brackish Water-crowfoot) with *R. hederaceus* (Ivy-leaved Crowfoot) and the trio found *Callitriche platycarpa* (Various-leaved Water-starwort) and *Nymphaea alba* (White water-lily), also growing in the pond.

The bull didn't make a move which was just as well as both Úna and I had become absorbed in identifying a type of Comfrey which was new to both of us and was growing along the track. We identified it as *Symphytum officinale* (Common Comfrey) and Paul confirmed it as that species on his return.

On the way back to the harbour, we found the minute *Sagina maritima* (Sea Pearlwort), *Sedum acre* (Biting Stonecrop) and many more species. We recorded over 160 species, eleven of them new to the hectad. Many thanks to Paul for a most informative and interesting outing.

Zoë Devlin

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### **BSBI Irish field programme, 2013**

These are dates for your diary only; full details are to be found in the BSBI Yearbook 2013. Three extra meetings are included in full here that are not to be found in the BSBI Yearbook 2013.

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April, Carrhill Wood, Bunclody, Co. Wexford (H12)**

**Leader:** Paul Green

A walk along the River Slaney to see *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *montanum* (see page 23) in Carrhill Wood. Meet in public car park S912.568 in Bunclody at 2.00 pm. Contact: Mob: 00 353 (0)87 7782496, E-mail: [paulnewross@eircom.net](mailto:paulnewross@eircom.net).

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May, Ballycurrin, Co. Mayo (H26)**

**Leaders:** Karen Banks & Gerry Sharkey

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June, Rossaveal, Connemara, Co. Galway (H16)**

**Leader:** John Conaghan

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June, Wetland plants, Brackagh Moss, Co. Armagh (H37)**

**Leader:** John Faulkner

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June, Kilcarren-Firville Bog, North Tipperary (H10)**

**Leader:** David Nash

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July, Ballyheigue, North Kerry (H2)**

**Leader:** Caroline McDauid



**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July, Maritime plants, Co. Sligo (H28)**

**Leader: Don Cotton**

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July, Glencar, Co. Leitrim (H29)**

**Leader: Michael Archer**

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July, Co. Westmeath (east) (H23)**

**Leader: Con Breen**

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July, West Donegal (H35)**

**Leader: Ralph Sheppard**

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> August, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow (H20)**

**Leader: Catriona Brady**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September**

**Irish AGM**

As part of celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> year, our AGM will be held in Knockreer House, Killarney, Co. Kerry. On Saturday the programme will consist of the formal AGM including reports from Officers. Elections to the next Committee will be followed by reports from Vice-county Recorders and by a series of short talks relevant to the occasion and to the venue. We expect to meet for an evening meal on Saturday night. On Sunday we will have an all-day field meeting in the National Park starting at Knockreer House. More details of the events and booking will be circulated closer to the event.

Enquiries to Gerry Sharkey: E-mail: [gsharkey@patodonnell.com](mailto:gsharkey@patodonnell.com).

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November, Tara Hill, Co. Wexford (H12)**

**Leader: Paul Green**

The aim of the meeting will be to see if we can refind *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense*, recorded here only the once on the west side of the hill in 1892 by H.G. Cuthbert. Meet 11.00 am in the church car park at Tara (T210.630). Contact: Mob: 00 353 (0)87 7782496, E-mail: [paulnewross@eircom.net](mailto:paulnewross@eircom.net).

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## **The *Epipactis palustris* survey – progress report 2012**

Over the autumn and winter I have been chasing up various old records for *Epipactis palustris*, going back where possible to the original record or specimens. Many data compilations such as Irish Topographical Botany (1901) succinctly summarise what was known in Praeger's time. However Praeger was limited in the amount of information he could squeeze into a line of type in ITB. Hence the entry for a particular county is often reduced to two or three place names, dates and literature references. By searching out the original references (often in the pages of the Irish Naturalist) extra information can be gleaned as to the site of the species and the circumstances of its discovery.

In the next few weeks all BSBI recorders will receive an updated review of the historical records that I have been able to trace. The main sources of these data include the herbarium records at DBN and other herbaria, plus the trawl through the Irish county floras. This is an on-going process and many BSBI members will be in a position to draw my attention to records I have either missed or not yet found. The aim of this exercise is to ascertain whether many records from apparently different areas actually refer to the same site (or site-complex) but published under different names.

One of the collateral benefits of this type of search is that the official data bases can be compared with the published records and herbarium specimens. In this way it becomes possible to learn something not only of the comprehensiveness of the data sets but also to understand the extent and consequences of gridding, re-gridding and retro-gridding. Modern field workers, equipped with GPS-instrumentation and excellent maps are accustomed to precise site-specific recording. It is worth bearing in mind that the Irish National Grid did not really become available on maps (at a scale of a half inch to the mile!) until the late 1950s.

The Marsh Helleborine survey is for all our members – not just BSBI recorders. Therefore “new” records are welcome from all, though contributors should notify the relevant recorder of any discoveries. I will not be passing on any unpublished *Epipactis palustris* records contributed by members to any other agency. If you would like to help with the survey in any way please get in touch and I will provide recording forms.

At this stage, in contrast to the usual issues relating to habitat loss and degradation, I have noticed that a number of well-known colonies of *Epipactis palustris* seem to be strengthening. Whether this is as a result of alterations to the water table, succession, changes in grazing, abandonment of land or responses to climate change remains to be seen. I have also noticed a number of new colonies that seem to have formed following the digging out of drains on the edges of raised bogs where marl is brought to the surface. These colonies may be the result of spread by seed onto these sites or the result of short-term rapid increase from previously undetected colonies from nearby sources. Whether they can survive in the longer term remains to be seen.

Declan Doogue, E-mail: [doogueflora@gmail.com](mailto:doogueflora@gmail.com)

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### **Recording the Irish flora – could you help?**

As members of the BSBI in Ireland, you can't have failed to notice that one of our major areas of activity is the recording and documentation of the Irish flora. This is done through our network of Vice-county Recorders (VCRs) who work on a voluntary basis carrying out field surveys, assembling and safe-keeping of the records, verifying and updating BSBI's distribution databases and occasionally preparing reports, e.g. on 'Rare and Threatened Plant Species' in their vice-county. It is a voluntary undertaking and the Committee for Ireland is extremely grateful for all the hard work put in by our Vice-county Recorders. Sometimes, opportunities arise to join the ranks of this network through resignations, etc., and, sometimes, it becomes necessary to share out the work-load so that new recorders can operate as 'apprentices' or joint recorders. Extra pairs of hands (and eyes!) are always welcome.

If you would like to get involved with recording the Irish flora either in your own vice-county, or an adjacent vice-county, or an area that you visit frequently, then please contact either of us by e-mail, by telephone or by letter. You do not need to be a 'professional' botanist to engage in recording work. We can assure you that if you do get involved, you will receive the full support of the BSBI's recorder network, the Committee for Ireland and the recently appointed BSBI 'Irish Officer', Maria Long.

The way in which people help may fit some of the categories outlined below, but please feel free to make contact if you have any other ideas too!

You may be:

- (1) interested in potentially being a VCR (Vice-county Recorder), now or in the future.
- (2) interested in being a joint-VCR.
- (3) interested in supporting a VCR. This is a great opportunity to become involved, and is very flexible. You could record plants and send the VCR the records. You could help the VCR with data entry/computer-based issues – it's a great way for young (and not so young!) members and friends of the BSBI to help and to learn!. The workload here could be as large or as small as you'd like, but bear in mind that every case will be different, and will depend on the situation of the VCR in question.
- (4) interested in helping the Irish Officer – e.g. with the website, with other communications, etc.

Gerry Sharkey, Chairman, BSBI Committee for Ireland, 2 Spencer Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, Ireland	Maria Long, Irish Officer, BSBI, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9, Ireland
Email: <a href="mailto:gsharkey@patodonnell.com">gsharkey@patodonnell.com</a> Tel: 00 353 (0)87 6202550, Mob: 00 353 (0)94 9025048 or Landline: 00 353 (0)1 8341868	Email: <a href="mailto:maria.long@bsbi.org.uk">maria.long@bsbi.org.uk</a> Web: <a href="http://www.bsbi.org.uk/ireland.html">http://www.bsbi.org.uk/ireland.html</a> Tel: 00353 (0)87 2578763

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### Book reviews

*The Flora of County Fermanagh.* Ralph S. Forbes & Robert H. Northridge. 864 pp. National Museums Northern Ireland, 153 Bangor Road, Cultra, Holywood, Co. Down, BT18 0EU, Northern Ireland. £25.00 hardback. ISBN 978-1-905989-28-7.

The authors Ralph Forbes and Robert Northridge have produced the best Flora Ireland has ever seen! The Flora of County Fermanagh is lavishly illustrated with around 350 photographs and 650 colour tetrad distribution maps. The book has a most attractive cover of a landscape with inserts of Dense-flowered Orchid, Mountain Avens and Yellow Saxifrage.

This Flora is the efforts of 35 years of field work by the authors from 1975 to 2010. There are 1,146 species plus 70 hybrids and varieties included

in the Flora.

There are chapters on Geology, Soils, Climate, Agriculture, Woodland and Forestry, Lakeland Fermanagh etc. These give you all the information you will need to know about the county.

The species accounts are among the most interesting of any Flora of Britain and Ireland I have ever read.

This Flora is a must buy as it is such a good read and value.

*A gardener's guide to native plants of Britain and Ireland.* Rosemary FitzGerald. 192 pp. The Crowood Press Ltd., Ramsbury, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 2HR. £14.99 paperback. ISBN 978-1-84797-309-2.

Written with infectious enthusiasm by a professional field researcher, it celebrates the remarkable qualities of our native plants, and describes their close involvement in our own heritage.

A superbly put together book with stunning photography. Over 200 of the most rewarding and easily grown of our wild flowers are featured, their needs and habits explained, and their historical and cultural significance noted.

Species accounts are organized into chapters focussing on the seasons when the plants have their greatest garden value.

A must buy for any keen gardener!

Paul R. Green

*The Wild Flowers of Loophead:* Carmel T. Madigan, Creative Studio, Ballyalla, Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland. [www.carmelmadigangallery.com](http://www.carmelmadigangallery.com). ISBN: 978 0 9572127 0 1. €20.00, p&p €3.00. £17.99, p&p £4.50

This very refreshing and engaging local Flora appeared in 2012. It is a work of love by local artist and poet, Carmel Madigan along with her 7-year-old son, James. They rambled through the entire peninsula and have documented and identified all the notable flora, which in itself is very impressive, as they got very little professional help. The book is delightfully illustrated by Carmel's photos art work and poems and gives a comprehensive account of the various habitats and their flora to be encountered on walks through the area. It is a 'must' for anyone with any interest in natural history.

Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington

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## CHAIRMAN'S/HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT 2011-2012

The Committee for Ireland met on five occasions during 2011-2012, on 29 October in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin, on 11 February in the Armagh Museum, Co. Armagh, on 22 April in Glasnevin, on 3 July in Glasnevin and, finally, on 17 August also in Glasnevin.

### FIELD MEETINGS

John Faulkner, the Field Meetings Secretary, arranged a programme of eleven field meetings for the year, excluding the short excursion associated with the AGM. These took in the north (Rathlin Island, Co. Antrim, **H39**), the south (Galtee Mountains, South Tipperary, **H7**), the east (Greenore, Co. Louth, **H31**) and the west (Belmullet, West Mayo, **H27**) of the island of Ireland. Of special importance this year has been the appearance of two field meetings aimed specifically at those who are botanical novices or who wanted to improve their skills in specific groups. Con Breen ran a Sedge Identification workshop in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath (**H23**) and John Faulkner ran a workshop for those wishing to improve their field recognition skills with special emphasis on grasses and sedges. The Committee for Ireland is committed to further workshops/meetings of this type in the future.

### THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE FOR IRELAND, 2011-2012

This year has been an exceptionally busy year with a number of significant initiatives being progressed.

As highlighted in last year's report, the 'Irish' project on *Epipactis palustris* (Marsh Helleborine) led by Dr Declan Doogue got underway in spring, 2012; an article in *Irish Botanical News* outlined the scope of the survey and how its results would be disseminated. An important aspect of this work is that it will enable us to identify key conservation sites and to track changes within them. As Declan says in his article ... "In future years, other rare species with contrasting habitat requirements and vegetation community affiliations may be suitable for further similar preliminary studies." The Committee for Ireland will be examining how these may be taken forward in the future once the current *Epipactis* project has been evaluated.

Although in its early stages, the Committee, through the leadership of Gerry Sharkey, is exploring a '1 in 9' survey with the support of the BSBI's Plant Unit. Whilst designed as an end in itself and an insight into local change, recording for this project will also provide valuable information towards the publication of the next distribution atlas in line with the BSBI's overall

recording strategy.

As if that wasn't enough, the Committee for Ireland is pleased to announce that it now has an Irish Officer, Dr Maria Long. David Pearman had joined a meeting of the Committee for Ireland in October 2011 to demonstrate the Distribution Database and to discuss recording in Ireland generally. He was supportive of the idea of appointing an Irish Officer and over the course of next few months a proposal was refined and finally submitted to BSBI Council in February 2012. An agreement to employ an Irish Officer for two days a week for two years was forthcoming and after a rigorous selection process, from 22 applicants, Dr Long was successful. She will start her work on 1 October 2012. This represents an enormous step for the Committee for Ireland and we are very aware of the huge responsibility we have to ensure that this post is successful and that it leads to a furtherance of Irish botany. In Dr Long, I think we have the right person for the job.

The success of the BSBI AGM in Galway in June 2011 has brought unexpected benefits; the Chair wrote to Professor Charles Spillane thanking him for the hospitality during the meeting and he wrote back suggesting that a Memorandum of Understanding be established between BSBI and the National University of Ireland, Galway to further our common interests. Currently a draft Memorandum is being considered by Galway and as soon as an agreed version is in place its contents will be disseminated to Irish members. We are likely to reap several benefits from this arrangement.

With the support of BSBI Council, the Committee for Ireland challenged the poor state of support for natural history at the National Museums and Galleries, Northern Ireland (the 'Ulster Museum') where there is no longer any botanists on the staff; the recession and change of emphasis appear to be the reasons for the dire situation that exists. The Committee is continuing to monitor the situation and will make further representations if it is felt that field work in Ireland is being hampered by a lack of access to specimens, records, etc.

It may have passed you by but the BSBI formally organised in Ireland in 1963 and 2013 represents our 50th anniversary. The Committee for Ireland is exploring ways in which this significant anniversary should be celebrated. One of founding members from 1963 was Maura Scannell who passed away in autumn 2011 at the age of 87. A series of 'reminiscences' were recorded in *Irish Botanical News* and these provided a poignant record of how she had 'touched' our lives. She will be sadly missed.

On another negative note, it had been the intention of the Committee for Ireland to hold a Recorders' Conference in spring 2012. However, the appointment of the Irish Officer had to take precedence and, in any case, it

was felt more appropriate to have the Irish Officer in place before such a meeting. It was therefore decided to run elements of a Recorder's Conference together with the AGM (in the form we have this weekend). However, the Committee is committed to organising future, regular Recorders' Conferences.

## COMMITTEE CHANGES

The composition of the Committee has been stable this year and attendance at Committee meetings exceptionally high. We are still working through to the full implementation of the new Constitution and new Committee members will be required to be elected at this AGM.

## VICE-COUNTY RECORDER CHANGES

As part of an on-going strategy to ensure that Vice-county Recorders are provided with appropriate support we have now established 'Vice-county Recorders and Recording' as a standing item on our Committee agendas. This has helped us identify more quickly when difficulties have arisen and hence a swifter resolution by way of Vice-county Recorder changes. A full list of Irish Vice-county Recorders is contained within the *BSBI Yearbook 2012*. The Committee is fully committed to helping Vice-county Recorders in their work and this year we have initiated a programme to assist the Vice-county Recorder for Co. Westmeath (**H23**), Con Breen, in computerising his dataset with the prospect of publication.

## PUBLICATIONS

We are pleased to announce that three publications have been produced by our members recently – these are Zoë Devlin's *Wildflowers of Ireland – a personal record*, Declan McGrath's *A guide to the Waterford coast* and John Parnell's (and Tom Curtis') Webb's *An Irish Flora*. Reviews of these may be found in *Irish Botanical News* **22**, March 2012. We are again indebted to Paul Green for his sterling work in producing this latter publication.

Finally, in such a busy and momentous year, we must thank the members of the Committee for Ireland for all their support and hard work. It is very much appreciated. We must also take this opportunity to thank the Armagh Museum and the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin for accommodating our meetings and the latter, particularly Matthew Jebb, for considerable assistance with the interviews for the Irish Officer's post. Finally, we must also thank the BSBI Council and, in particular, David Pearman and the president Ian Bonner for supporting the appointment of an Irish Officer.



They have demonstrated the fullest confidence in the Committee for Ireland and we acknowledge that.

Fiona Devery

Brian S. Rushton

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

August 2012

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### **Irish Naturalists' Journal – free to a good home**

I have a long run of Irish Naturalists' Journal that need a new home. The run is from Volume 15(9), January 1967 to Volume 31(2), December 2010 and is complete except for three issues, Volume 16(7), Volume 16(9) and Volume 28(8). I could probably deliver if reasonably close to my home (County Antrim, Northern Ireland) but I would have to post if further afield; the recipient would pay the postal charges. If interested, please contact me: Brian S. Rushton, 62 Semicock Road, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland, BT53 6PY or by telephone 00 44 (0)28 2766 4803 or by e-mail: [bsracademic@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bsracademic@hotmail.co.uk).

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### **CONTRIBUTIONS INTENDED FOR**

#### ***IRISH BOTANICAL NEWS No. 24***

Should reach the Editor before January 31<sup>st</sup> 2014

The Editor Paul Green can be contacted at: *Yoletown, Ballycullane, New Ross, Co. Wexford*. E-mail: [paulnewross@eircom.net](mailto:paulnewross@eircom.net) or by Mobile on 00 353 (0)87 7782496.

The Editor would like to thank Ben Evans, Katherine Slade, Mike Stephens Olivier Martin and Tim Rich for help with this issue.

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## **Registers of BSBI Members' Interests**

At a recent of the CFI it was agreed that an open register of members' botanical interests would be useful. Such a register would consist of a simple statement of the various themes that interest members (apart from straightforward recording). It developed out of a proposal advanced recently regarding the need to develop an indigenous panel of experts in different areas of taxonomy within Ireland.

To keep it as simple as possible, the register will consist initially of a spreadsheet with a number of columns assigned to broad topics. The results will be included in the next issue of IBN and can be altered and updated as necessary. It is simply a register of our members' interests – not an indication or claim to expertise in any particular area. I hope that members will in this way make direct contact with each other. If there are sufficient respondents to any particular topic, it may then be possible to arrange seminar-type sessions on our future programmes.

I include below an easily-completed layout which may suit. If some of these categories do not suit, use the "Other" field.

Name:

Contact Address:

Taxonomic groups:

Biogeography of the Irish Flora:

Ecology, Vegetation and Habitat:

History of Floristic Botany:

Conservation:

Herbs and Herbalism:

Gadgets and Gizmos:

Other:

Please return in whatever format is most convenient. Declan Doogue, 12, Glasilawn Rd., Dublin 11. E-mail: [doogueflora@gmail.com](mailto:doogueflora@gmail.com)



Maria Long on fieldwork in Blackditch, Co. Wicklow.  
Photo: M. Long © 2012. See page 6.



Fiona MacGowan & Mark McCorry and daughters Órla & Hannah.  
Photo: F. MacGowan © 2012  
See page 8.



Irishtown, Co. Dublin.

Showing habitat of *Gnaphalium coarctatum*.

Photo: P.R. Green © 2012.

Insert: Fruiting head of *G. coarctatum*.

Photo: R. McMullen © 2012.

See page 29.