

Monks Wood Experimental Station,
Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon.

17 December 1969

Dear Recorder,

It is now about a year since I wrote my first circular letter to you all. There has just been another meeting of the Records Committee, so it seems timely to write to you again

Card Index Drawers and Cards

New Recorders may like to be reminded that it is hoped that a card index will be prepared and maintained by every recorder on behalf of the Society. Where none already exists new drawers and cards can be obtained by writing to me. Next year I would like to prepare a report on the location and completeness of those indexes - Could you help by completing the enclosed FORM. If no form is returned your county may be omitted from the list.

B.S.B.I. Recorders and Museums

One of the problems discussed at the Local Flora Writers' Conference in Aberystwyth in September last year, which I mentioned when I wrote to you, was how to ensure that Herbaria in local museums are properly cared for. A number of speakers there emphasised the danger that many valuable collections may be neglected unless their importance is pointed out. Two ideas are now being put into effect to avert this danger.

Firstly all specimens in museums which support records which have been published, and particularly if they are in the list of criteria for publication of Plant Records which I shall be referring to later, should be labelled to indicate their importance. For this purpose I am enclosing sticky labels of two kinds.

- i) Marked "On loan from B.S.B.I. Any specimen which supports a record which is to be published in Plant Records should carry this label when it is put into a museum.
- ii) Not marked "On loan from B.S.B.I." Any specimen which you come across in a museum which you know supports a published record should have this label attached to it.

The only part of the labels which needs filling in is the V.C. (number) and the Name (of the County). However, before you use them, I hope you will talk to the Museum Curator about the system and why we are starting it.

The second idea is to send you all a copy of "A Guide to Herbarium Practice" by Dr. J.W. Franks. This is a handbook which was produced by the Museums Association for curators a few years ago. With its information behind you, you may find it easier to discuss with curators the keeping of material in the museum in which the bulk of the County material is going to be stored. The Guide will be marked "Property of the B.S.B.I.", so keep it with your card index to hand to your successor in due course.

A further aspect of the relationship between recorders and museums was discussed at Aberystwyth, and I referred to this in last year's letter. I hope that by now you have nominated a museum for your vice county: it would certainly be most convenient if the Society's records for a County could be kept at a local museum, particularly if this were the County museum. There is no doubt that museums are much more outward looking than they were a decade ago, and they are beginning to be just as anxious to become information centres as specimen centres. A Local Flora Committee directed by a County Recorder and working from a County museum is an ideal to be aimed for, which is achieved for example in Perthshire.

Plant Records

Dr. Geoffrey Halliday, the Biology Dept., The University, Lancaster, has now become the editor of Plant Records. He is anxious to receive as many records as possible which fall within the criteria outlined in my letter last December. These were:

1. New County Records
2. Second County Records
3. First County Records since 1930
4. Records which significantly alter the distribution which is not one of the above.
5. First or second records, or the first record since 1930, for the major islands in V.C.'s 102-104 and 110-112.

Preparation of records for submission should take place as soon as possible after the end of the season. I have to do this for Cambridgeshire. Perhaps a short account of how I prepare mine may help you to prepare yours. As soon as I receive a record I check to see whether it is new for a 10 km square. If it is I cross it off on the Master Card and make out an Individual Record Card. The data from this card is later transferred to the species card index before I send it to myself at the Biological Records Centre for incorporation in the data store for the next Atlas. If there are only four or fewer previous records I transfer the record to a list to be published in the next number of Nature in Cambridgeshire. When I am preparing this I pick out any which meet the criteria above to publish in Plant Records.

Records for publication should be arranged in the order given in the List of British Vascular Plants (Dandy, 1958). An asterisk before the vice-comital number will indicate an N.C.R. Two examples of recent records are given as models of what we would like to see in future:

46/16 RANUNCULUS HEDERACEUS L.

104 N. Eudes: Talisker, Isle of Skye. In ruts of a cart track near the farm. GR 18/33, G. Halliday, 1968, LANC. This is the second record for the island.

432/2 PEDICULARIS SYLVATICA L. subsp. HIBERNICA D.A. Webb

*104 N.E. Budes: Talisker, Isle of Skye. Common in moorland above the waterfall growing mixed with subsp. sylvatica. GR 18/33, G. Halliday, 1968, LANC.

LANC. is of course the abbreviation for the Herbarium in which the specimen is lodged, properly labelled I hope. These herbarium abbreviations can be found in British Herbaria (Kent, 1958), but if you haven't access to a copy, let me know and I will give you the appropriate letters.

You probably all know that Proceedings and Watsonia are to be merged into a new Watsonia, the first number of which will appear next spring. We hope to begin our new style Plant Records with the new style Journal. Full instructions will come out with that number, but please send in plenty of records for 1969 to Dr. Halliday now.

Recorders Conference

The next conference will take place in Edinburgh from 4th - 6th September, 1970. This is in the middle of the Festival, so we are leaving the Saturday evening free for those who want to book for a performance. Our accommodation, in a University Hostel, is assured, but we do need to know now if you are likely to attend. Please send a post-card to Mrs. Mary Briggs, White Cottage, Slinfold, Sussex.

Peter Hall has recently produced a very comprehensive Hints on the Determination of some critical species etc. in the Sussex Flora. Perhaps similar guides or instructions have been prepared for use in other counties. It might be worthwhile collecting these together and discussing them in Edinburgh. I shall be glad to take any examples with me if you are unable to come yourself.

New Recorders

In the last twelve months there have been a number of changes, and I am very pleased to welcome the following as Recorders, and I hope to see them in Edinburgh.

England	7	L. Stearn
	14	P.C. Hall
	61	Miss E. Crackles
Wales	47	Miss V.J. Macnair
Scotland	80	R.W.M. Corner
	85	G. Ballantyne
	87	A.W. Robson
	96	Miss E.P. Beattie
	97	A. Slack

The Society is deeply indebted to J.D. Grose, D. Philcox, R.F. May and Dr. Derek Ratcliffe, who have now resigned as Recorders, for all the work they have done.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

Yours sincerely,



F.H. Perring.

P.S. I have just received the following note from P.D. Sell and C. West:

The subspecies of Pilosella officinarum C.H. & F.W. Schultz (Hieracium pilosella L.) have not yet been mapped. In the course of the next two years we hope to prepare these maps, and during that period would like to see specimens from any part of the British Isles. The specimens must be labelled in legible handwriting and should if possible have a six figure grid reference.

P.P.S. Noelle Hamilton has just asked me to say that:

A few Recorders have not yet returned the Rare Species List No. 2, which went out in October/November, 1968. She would be very grateful to receive these now so that she can include the most up-to-date information in the final lists which will be sent out also to County Trusts and Conservancy Regions before the end of January, 1970.

It is hoped that, during 1970, each Recorder may be able to assist us further by carrying out counts of populations of the rare species in his/her area; further information about this will be sent early in the New Year.

Finally, lists for Reserves may be returned now, if completed.