

NOTES ON THE INTRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF
CYMBALARIA MURALIS GAERTN., MEY. & SCHERB. IN
SCOTLAND

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(written c. 1932)

The accepted belief has been that Dillenius (1724) was the first recorder of *Cymbalaria muralis* as a British plant. He considered that the Physic Garden at Chelsea, London, was the place whence the plant, a native of southern Europe, originated in England, or at all events about London. It has, however, recently been ascertained from John Goodyer's notes that its first introduction was into William Coys's garden at Stubbers, North Ockington, Essex, in the early seventeenth century, and that it was planted in Goodyer's garden at Droxford, Hants., in 1617. From there it became dispersed over the British Isles. It is a prolific flowerer, and well deserves the name "mother of thousands", by which it is known in the west of England. Other vernacular names are "roving jenny" and "roving sailor".

In Scotland, as might be expected, the plant is not mentioned in the works of the pioneers of Scottish botany—Reid (1683), Sibbald (1684) and Lightfoot (1777). The Edinburgh Botanic Garden was founded in 1680, and by 1683 is said to have contained 3,000 species of plants, but *Cymbalaria muralis* is not named among them. Mr. J. R. Matthews of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, tells me that he has no knowledge of the plant's introduction to that Garden, but since the Garden has occupied its present site for just over a century its cultivation would not date so very far back. He also says that it is just possible that the plant was cultivated in one or other of the Gardens before removal to Inverleith Row.

The probability is that it was brought into Scotland as a garden plant during the period when planting and gardening came into vogue about the beginning of the eighteenth century, but the first Scottish record is given by Hopkirk (1813)—"at Bothwell Castle on the Clyde", where it continues at the present time. Hooker (1821); considered it very rare, and mentions the Bothwell Castle station, as does Henedy (1878); he also adds "garden walls in various places". Patrick (1831) records the species, and the *Annals of the Andersonian Naturalists' Society* (1893) notes its occurrence at Chatelherault (Gadzow), Lochwinnoch and Balloch Castle, while the British Association *Handbook on the Clyde Area* (1901) records the plant in four divisions. My first acquaintance

with this attractive species was on the occasion of an Andersonian Naturalists' Society excursion to Chatelherault about forty years ago, when its abundant festoons of delicate pale purple flowers were a delight to the eyes.

Cymbalaria muralis is now well distributed in the Clyde area, and I am indebted to observers in the above named Society for the following information.

At Barncluith (Hamilton) it has spread so much over old gardens that it has recently had to be cleaned off the walls as a troublesome weed. In upper Clydesdale it occurs so far up as near Elvanfoot (Dr. Donald Patton). In Renfrewshire it is recorded as rare, but on the walls of the old Collegiate Church at Lochwinnoch it used to be plentiful, and probably is so still. In Dunbartonshire it is found on the kitchen walls at Balloch Castle, and at Rhu it is remarkably abundant on walls at Gareloch head and at Ardmay; below Arrocher it has long been known to Mr. John R. Lee. Mrs P. Ewing reports that she found it at Kilmun, Argyllshire, first about the year 1884, since when it has spread and is now abundant there. Dr. Patton records its abundance on the Island of Bute. In Ayrshire the species is recorded as an alien. Further south it is described as an outcast or escape; in Dumfriesshire and Kirkcudbrightshire the localities mentioned are Kirkcudbright, 1882; Dumfries, 1890; Wigtown, 1893. In Peeblesshire it is noted as common on walls, but originally introduced. In the eastern border counties *Cymbalaria* is recorded previous to 1853 as established in so many gardens, on walls, etc., that its eradication would be difficult. North Berwick, East Lothian, is another locality named further north.

In the Forth area there are early records by Woodforde (1824) and Greville (1824), and the stations named are the debris of Salisbury Craigs; wall near Newhaven; new road to Portobello, Trinity Mains. Martin (1927) says that the species is frequent, and the localities show that it occurs on or about all the old castles and similar buildings of the district.

In the vicinity of Larbert, Stirlingshire, it occurs on a wall around a wood, well away from gardens. Instances of this character, some distance away from possible centres of cultivation, are exceptional.

In Perthshire it is recorded as naturalised on some old walls, and in Forfarshire there was only one record given by Gardiner (1848). Dr. William G. Smith of Edinburgh tells me that at a later date he knew this station, and that the plant now occurs in other places in Forfarshire, but not in so many as in the Lothians. Stations in that county named by another observer are a garden wall at Bervie, and at a small village near Montrose.

In Aberdeenshire it is recorded previous to 1853 for the Den of Rubislaw and on old walls, but always the outcast of a garden. At a later date Ferryhill and elsewhere around Aberdeen are

named. Traill (1923) gives five stations in Aberdeen, and the species occurs in only one, doubtfully two, parishes adjacent to Aberdeen.

In Banffshire the parishes of Fordyce, Banff, Gamrie, Alvah, King Edward, Rothiemay and Aberlour are named. The parish of Fyvie is named by Prof. Traill. There is an early record from Elgin, namely on the wall at Gordon Castle, 1832; rare, and certainly introduced.

On the north-west coast the only report that I have is that the species occurs on an old castle in west Ross-shire, and in various places in the west, Loch Duich, and elsewhere. Further south it occurs on walls near Oban, Argyllshire.

The list of references names the authors from whose works information has been collected, but makes no claim to be exhaustive.

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