

The herbarium of J. E. Lousley

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The important private herbarium of Job Edward (Ted) Lousley was recently presented to the herbarium of Reading University (RNG) by his widow Mrs Dorothy Lousley.

Ted Lousley at one time considered moving to live in Berkshire, the county whence his ancestors came (the Lousley family have resided in Berkshire for some 800 years), and it is therefore happily appropriate that his collection be deposited at Reading.

His herbarium certainly seems to have been the largest and finest in private hands in the country. It was kept in exact order according to Dandy's (1958) *List of British vascular plants*, with almost as many additions in blue pencil as printed entries. On arrival at Reading the collection was sorted for incorporation into the main herbarium. As each sheet had to be handled individually before incorporation, the opportunity was taken to record each carefully. It was not practicable to keep the herbarium separate, as a special collection.

The herbarium was found to consist of a total of 24,465 gatherings mounted on 19,950 sheets: many sheets had several specimens from different localities, but all were clearly labelled. All but 344 gatherings (1.5%) were collected in the British Isles. As J. E. Lousley wrote the *Flora of the Isles of Scilly* (1971) and the *Flora of Surrey* (1976), a note was kept of the number of gatherings from these areas, vice-counties 1b and 17; these amounted to 860 (4%) from the Isles of Scilly and 3,570 (15%) from Surrey. Ted Lousley's passion for 'horrible things with horrible prickles'—aliens introduced with imported wool shoddy fertiliser mainly from Australia and South America, made it necessary to record these as well. There were at least 4,000 (16%) gatherings of wool-shoddy and other aliens collected from throughout the British Isles.

The herbarium gives a very comprehensive cover of the flora of the British Isles, as may be expected of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable botanist who claimed to have seen every one of its native vascular plant species in its natural habitat.

Critical and difficult groups are well represented and in the main have been carefully verified by specialists. The notable exceptions are the *Rubus fruticosus* aggregate, represented by only three gatherings, and *Taraxacum*, represented by 35. Other critical groups are represented as follows: *Salix* 181, *Rumex* 1,126, *Polygonum* 326, *Chenopodium* 308, *Atriplex* 112, *Sagina* 151, *Silene* 114, *Arenaria* 56, *Ranunculus* 246, *Fumaria* 115, *Lepidium* 120, *Alchemilla* 64, *Potentilla* 92, *Rosa* 66, *Vicia* 179, *Trifolium* 387, *Medicago* 218, *Erodium* 152, *Geranium* 132, *Euphorbia* 114, *Viola* 204, *Epilobium* 145, *Gentianella* 83, *Galium* 138, *Myosotis* 96, *Mentha* 176, *Solanum* 105, *Euphrasia* 298, *Veronica* 208, *Verbascum* 95, *Senecio* 105, *Hieracium* 644, *Centaurea* 108, *Potamogeton* 242, *Allium* 78, *Juncus* 301, *Vulpia* 104, *Bromus* 271, *Poa* 219, *Festuca* 99, *Agrostis* 156, *Eragrostis* 178, *Carex* 949, *Scirpus* 118 and *Dactylorhiza* 116.

These figures may be of interest to anyone working on any of these genera. Such persons are welcome to consult the material but prior notice should be given to the curator by intending visitors. As is nowadays customary, loans are made to recognized institutions, but not to private individuals.

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