Obituaries

PETER HADLAND DAVIS
(1918–1992)

Born at Weston-super-Mare on 18 June 1918, Professor Peter H. Davis died in Edinburgh on 5 March 1992. My first encounter with Peter Davis was in 1946, as a raw undergraduate, attending my first Botany I class at the University of Edinburgh, where I was planning to read Agriculture. I was somewhat taken aback at the sight of a slender figure in a long, hairy, sheepskin coat, who stutteringly introduced himself. Although he was ten years or more older than the rest of us, he soon became a dominant character in our group and certainly set the pace for us as regards systematic botany. This was easily explained by his earlier background, when he was influenced by his contacts with the Ingwersen plant nursery which led to what became a life-long passion for plant collecting. He had established contact with Sir William Wright Smith, Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden and Regius Professor of Botany at the University of Edinburgh. This resulted in his going there to read Botany, after spending most of the war years in the East Mediterranean where he was employed by the security service (mainly dealing with screening mail) and acquired an extensive knowledge of the flora which was to stand him in good stead later. It was, understandably, disconcerting in our practical Botany classes at the University when faced with having to identify as a test 100 specimens or illustrations of plants (a common practice under Sir William Wright Smith) to find that some obscure species amongst them had been discovered for the first time by Peter himself. Such was his disingenuous charm that we didn't even cry foul! He was awarded First Class Honours in Botany.

Peter Davis continued during his undergraduate years to work on his Mediterranean plant collections which he had brought with him to Edinburgh and he soon involved me in working up the Scrophulariaceae amongst which was a new species of *Digitalis* from Anatolia, *D. davisii*, the first new species I ever described. In the meanwhile, I had developed an interest in Spain, having gone there first on a plant-collecting expedition with Dr Paul Giuseppi, a Felixstowe surgeon and renowned collector and alpine garden plant specialist, who was also a friend of Peter Davis. Peter and I joined forces in a plant collecting tour of Spain in 1948, sponsored by the Royal Horticultural Society. I then accompanied him on an expedition to Anatolia in 1950. Botanising with Peter was an education in itself, for he was a real professional. Food, personal discomfort, physical exhaustion all counted for nothing: nothing mattered but the plant collecting. He taught me how to make sketches and accurate notes, drilled me in the meticulous preparation and numbering of the material, how to make collections of seeds and more subtle tricks such as how not to miss plants hidden in screes. Perhaps best of all was conversation, which ranged widely from Henry James and the use of punctuation to Mediterranean plant life and culture, all intermingled with anecdotes about colourful friends and acquaintances.

Thereafter, our ways separated – he remained in Edinburgh and joined the staff of the University Botany Department, where he eventually became Professor of Taxonomic Botany (1979–85), while I went to Cambridge and subsequently to Madrid and Liverpool. Our floristic interests too diverged and we did not collaborate further in our respective areas although we kept in close touch and it was as teachers of plant taxonomy that we both felt the need for a text that did justice to the subject, rather than the old-fashioned McGraw Hill volumes that were all that were available, apart from manuals of plant classification systems such as Hutchinson, Warming & Potter and Lawrence (this latter admittedly having a broader treatment of the subject matter). Thus began our collaboration on *Principles of Angiosperm Taxonomy*, which was published in 1963. Although individual chapters were drafted by one of us, we both revised and often rewrote each other's contributions. The intellectual clarity of the text which several reviewers commented on owed much to Peter's fine feel for language and style.

Peter was not at home with many of the ways in which plant taxonomy developed and was happiest with the more traditional morphological aspects and with exploring the basic principles of classification which he sought to clarify, based largely on his extensive practical experience of 'doing taxonomy'. Yet he enjoyed intellectual discussions with some of the leading figures in the rapidly changing field of modern systematics and genetics such as G. Ledyard Stebbins and C. H. Waddington. He did not engage in multivariate systematics, leaving others to master the techniques. Not for him were molecular systematics or cladistic approaches. Nor did he, with rare exceptions, participate in international meetings, congresses or symposia, conserving his energies for what had become his life's work, the preparation of the *Flora of Turkey*, begun in 1959. This ten-volume Flora will undoubtedly go down in the history of taxonomy as a landmark work. Its completion was a major achievement and very much a result of the energy he devoted to it and the enthusiasm with which he inspired the small team of collaborators who worked with him on each volume, although often driving them to near despair as he fussed over details.

He had a wide circle of friends in many different walks of life: when staying with him in his elegant town house near the Water of Leith, one never knew who would knock at the door at any time of day or night. He was a knowledgeable collector of modern paintings and drawings and an authority on Wemyss-ware of which he built up an impressive assemblage. He showed remarkable generosity to those he favoured and delighted in hosting parties at his home, whether for visiting Russian botanists or some distinguished artist.

He was one of the most colourful figures in plant taxonomy and will be sadly missed. The remembrance held for him on the occasion of his funeral was a strangely elating occasion. One could just imagine him in some botanical Nirvana, peopled with Wemyss cats and his comfortable furniture and objets d'art, looking down at us and giggling.

V. H. Heywood

RECOLLECTIONS OF PETER DAVIS

Important as it is to recognise the achievements of Peter Davis in taxonomy, it would be wrong not to try and record, both for those who knew him and those who did not, the colourful and irreverent side of his personality which co-existed with his dedication to science.

Unlike many nine-till-five academics, who go home to the worthy sameness of domestic care, his bachelor life enabled him to pursue wholeheartedly his interests in art, collecting, friendship and the wilder shores of human association. He was not a career aesthete for whom these things are a pose or an end in themselves: they were for him an essential and nourishing complement to his botany. His marvellous parties in St Bernard's Row, down in Stockbridge, used to bring together a great variety of congenial spirits from many walks of life, visitors from London as well as Edinburians. The essential requirement was that people should interest him, interest one another and never be dull.

He had a fine collection of paintings, mainly but by no means exclusively modern. Many were by contemporary Scottish artists, all of whom he knew and whose sensuous and assured use of colour strongly appealed to him. He had also assembled an original and diverse collection of furniture and bric-a-brac which came together in the pretty house to make a rich and highly distinctive whole. It was fastidiously organised but livable, not precious. Although he knew a lot about some things, Wemyss pottery for example, of which he was a pioneer collector, and he had a representative collection of the bizarre products of Barvas on the western shores of the island of Lewis, a place never reached by the potter's wheel, his acquisitions were stimulated by passion and appetite, not scholarship. A camp thread was discernible in some things, such as the collection of sporrans which hung like trophies in the downstairs loo, but this was not a dominant note. Everything was interesting and he had a wonderful eye for the strange and beautiful lurking in unexpected places. The spoils enlarged the sensibilities of many who came to St Bernard's Row.

On party nights the jacket of his dark suit would reveal a crimson lining, an uncharacteristic

excess he would probably not have continued to affect had he been to Oxford instead of Edinburgh. In no other respect was he provincial. Sartorial effect was not otherwise something he bothered about at all although his invariable outdoor appearance, in winter at least, did achieve a certain idiosyncratic style. He wore a narrow cloth cap with sewn-down peak, muffler and a short, heavy twill overcoat. His hands would be thrust into its pockets as he walked, with short steps, elbows in, drawn up tight. With his disturbed complexion and ever-twinkling eyes behind his glasses, he looked like some unfrocked parson who had become the faintly disreputable associate of an on-course bookie.

It has been convenient for some to see Peter Davis as a sort of Jekyll and Hyde character: the eminent and reputable academic on the one hand and the frivolous and slightly 'sinister' eccentric on the other. I believe he was more of a piece than this suggests. The wit and judgement he exercised in personal relations and in his enjoyment of art and the intellectual and physical stamina he brought to his work were, in fact, a continuum. I once asked him what he thought about the fashionable trends in genetics and molecular biology as they affected botany. It was an unkind and disingenuous question as I was pretty sure taxonomy was thought by many at that time to have been upstaged by these developments, more then perhaps than now. He paused for a long time, as if searching for an unprejudiced comment on something he found uncongenial, even threatening. Then, quietly and deliberately: "It is very interesting, and very important; but I believe it loses sight of the whole plant, its community and its place in nature".

He detested pretentiousness, respected hard work, competence and above all integrity in whomsoever he found it. His favourite novel was that cruel analysis of dishonour among thieves, *The Wings of the Dove*. Looking back across the years since I was first taken to one of his parties in early 1960, an occasion from which so many Edinburgh friendships were to spring, I realise how keenly I used to enjoy seeing him: always acute, always interesting, always such fun. The last time I set eyes on him, after we had been in London for some years, was from the car in the twilight of a winter evening. He was turning out of Moray Place into Doune Terrace in his cap and twill overcoat, his hands in his pockets, elbows tucked in as he headed down to Stockbridge. The fading light of the western sky was reflected in his glasses, giving him an unwontedly blind look. I wanted to stop but we were in a hurry. Later, when I learned of his last illness, I consoled myself with the thought that the clouds of forgetfulness had perhaps already begun to envelop him and that he would simply have wondered whom this importunate stranger could be. I shall never know.

P. HARRISON

RONALD D'OYLEY GOOD
(1896–1992)

Ronald Good M.A., Sc.D., F.L.S., died on 11 December 1992, at the age of 96. An intelligent and solitary man, he outlived most of his contemporaries. He was the son of a doctor who lived in High West Street, Dorchester, close to the County Museum, which Good visited regularly from the age of ten. What motivated his lifelong interests in botany and local history we do not know, but his teachers at Weymouth College must have encouraged his love of science, in an age when most intelligent boys were steered towards the classics. He was certainly recording wild flowers for the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society (D.N.H.A.S.) before 1914, when he made the outstanding record of *Ranunculus ophioglossifolius* near Tincleton (vide Baker, E. G., *Journal of Botany (London)* **52**: 277 (1914)). In 1915 the Society awarded him the Cecil Silver Medal for an essay on Radium.

During World War I he served with the Inns of Court O.T.C. in 1916, was commissioned in the 4th Dorsets in 1917, and served in France until wounded, after which he was moved to Ireland. He entered Downing College, Cambridge, in 1919 as an Exhibitioner, and later became a Foundation Scholar and obtained a double First Class Honours in Botany. One of his teachers was Albert Seward, who may have triggered his interest in plant evolution and geography. At Cambridge he rowed for his College Eight.

On leaving Cambridge in 1922, Good joined the herbarium staff at the British Museum (Natural History), with J. E. Dandy as a colleague. Here he built up his knowledge of the floras of the world,

and produced a series of papers on plant geography. He also visited Canada with the British Association. He married in 1927.

In 1928 he joined the new University College at Hull as Head of the Botany Department, and remained there for 31 years, becoming Professor in 1946. During this time the student population at Hull rose from about 30 to several thousand. Among Good's students were Eva Crackles, Professor G. Lucas (Kew), Professor D. Read (Sheffield) and Professor W. Armstrong (Hull). Good used his time to produce three, scholarly books, one of which, *The geography of the flowering plants*, was to go through four editions and is still the standard work on the subject in English. Good preferred the Darwinian approach to research, involving many years of thought before producing a magnum opus, to the modern custom of writing or helping to write as many short papers as possible. Good's family (he had one daughter) lived at Cottingham near Hull, but every vacation was spent in his beloved Dorset, where from 1931 to 1939 he carried out an impressive survey of old roads, lost villages and the county's flora. This involved visiting 7500 sites and making over a quarter of a million records of plant species. During this time he co-operated with C. D. Day (an entomologist) and C. Diver in ecological work, but the survey of Dorset was a one-man effort. Good joined the D.N.H.A.S. in 1939 and won its Mansel-Pleydell silver medal. The next year he was able to publish his work on old Dorset roads, but the war delayed other publications. During World War II he served in the Home Guard in both Dorset and Yorkshire. He had to wait for peace before he could see through the press his *Geography of the flowering plants*, a local history of Weymouth and his *Geographical handbook of the Dorset flora*. Peace also allowed him to travel, notably to Bahrain where he collected specimens, and also to Australia, South America and the Caribbean.

In 1959 Good retired from Hull and came to live in Parkstone, Dorset, where he stayed for 18 years. During this time he was an active member of the D.N.H.A.S., leading many field meetings, editing the annual reports on botany and rainfall, acting as President between 1961 and 1964, and then becoming a Trustee. He was also a founder member of the Dorset Trust for Nature Conservation and was instrumental in drawing attention to one of the first Trust reserves at Brackets Coppice, saving it from devastation. He was an accomplished artist in pastels during this part of his retirement.

Good's wife died in 1975, and two years later he took a flat in Albury Park near Shere in Surrey, on the site of John Evelyn's 17th century garden. Here I recall commenting on the tidy state of the grounds during a visit, when he told me with his usual charm that all the able-bodied occupants helped with gardening chores, and he himself swept the paths. Though less mobile than before, he produced three more books at Albury, one on evolution, one on lost Dorset villages and a revised *Concise Flora of Dorset*. From 1989 his left leg became paralysed and he spent his last three years in a Henley nursing home.

Good's contributions to British botany were mostly made in Dorset. His extensive field survey during the 1930s resulted in many new county records for plants such as *Centaurium tenuiflorum*, *Epipactis leptochila* and *Euphrasia anglica* as well as new sites for *Dianthus armeria*, *Himantoglossum hircinum*, *Lobelia urens* and *Sparganium natans (minimum)*. It is not clear whether he himself saw *Simethis planifolia* at Branksome before its disappearance in about 1925. His extensive field notes, species maps and some specimens are preserved at the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Furzebrook. The 1948 *Geographical handbook* pioneered the publication of plant distribution maps, and he not only anticipated the National Grid by producing his own Grid of Dorset, but also subdivided each Grid square into 16 parts for mapping. All this work was done by hand, including the preparation of maps.

In the field of world botany Good was a loner who broke new ground. His broad view of plant geography was original and well-argued. He pointed out that affinities between the floras of Australia and South Africa, for example, were best explained by Wegener's theory of Continental Drift. At this time Wegener's theory was unpopular, but with the advent of plate tectonics it has become accepted. Another original conclusion was that the North Temperate flora is still in a state of flux following the catastrophe of repeated Ice Ages. He was the first botanist to suggest that the spread of *Himantoglossum hircinum* in southern England in the first half of this century was due to climatic change (*New Phytologist* **35**: 142–170 (1936)). His two books on plant evolution express his own ideas without reviewing the scientific literature. They emphasise our ignorance of most of the factors controlling the evolution of plants.

Good's herbarium specimens will be found in Dorchester Museum (**DOR**), the Natural History

Museum (**BM**) and I.T.E., Furzebrook, while his 1950 collection from Bahrain is at Kew (**K**). The list of his publications given below may be incomplete, but shows his eclectic interests.

I am grateful to Mrs Grinsley (daughter), Kate Hebditch (County Museum, Dorchester), Professor Gren Lucas (ex-pupil), Nigel Webb (I.T.E., Furzebrook) and others who have helped me to compile this obituary.

MAJOR PUBLICATIONS OF R. D. GOOD

1933 *Plants and human economics*. Cambridge University Press.
1940 *The old roads of Dorset*. Reprinted 1966. H. Cummin, Bournemouth.
1945 *Weyland: the story of Weymouth and its countryside*. Longmans, Dorchester.
1947 *The geography of the flowering plants*. Longmans, London (eds 2–4 1953, 1964, 1974).
1948 *A geographical handbook of the Dorset flora*. Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, Dorchester.
1956 *Features of evolution in the flowering plants*. Longmans, London (2nd ed., Dover, New York, 1974).
1979 *The lost villages of Dorset*. Dovecot Press, Stanbridge.
1981 *The philosophy of evolution*. Dovecot Press, Stanbridge.
1984 *A concise Flora of Dorset*. Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, Dorchester.

H. J. M. Bowen

SONIA C. HOLLAND
(1912–1993)

With the death of Sonia Holland in January 1993, the B.S.B.I. has lost one of its most accurate and conscientious recorders and a field botanist who contributed in many ways to the study and conservation of the British flora. Her countryside interests were wide. She had a good working knowledge of birds and bird-song and latterly she became interested in dragonflies.

Sonia was one of the daughters of Dr C. A. Hill of Liverpool, where she was born on 4 April 1912. On her father's death in 1922, the family moved to Aberdovey, where her love of the countryside began. She met her future husband, Bill Holland, at an Artillery Camp at Towyn during World War II and they married and settled in Cheltenham in 1947. They had one son, Clive. Bill Holland died in 1972. Hers was a close-knit family; she kept in close touch with her sisters and enjoyed her visits to them in West Somerset, where she hunted Black Poplars.

Living in Cheltenham, with the Cotswolds and Severn Vale on her doorstep, she saw the need for an active natural history society. Thus she got together with some of her naturalist friends and in 1948 founded the Cheltenham and District Naturalists' Society. Sadly, the established Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club was no longer filling that role. The Cheltenham Society flourished and expanded to become the North Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society in 1957 and the Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society in 1974. Sonia was Vice-chairman of the Society in 1961 and she edited its excellent bimonthly journal for many years. Sonia was a founder member of the Gloucestershire Trust for Nature Conservation (G.T.N.C.) in 1962; she sat on its Council for 15 years and served on its Conservation Committee. She joined the B.S.B.I. in 1969 and served on the Council (1970–74). She was the Society's recorder for v.cc. 33 and 34 until her death.

With the formation of the G.T.N.C., the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves (now R.S.N.C.) passed the management of Badgeworth Nature Reserve from the Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club to the G.T.N.C. I had known the site, which protects the rare Adder's-tongue Spearwort (*Ranunculus ophioglossifolius*), since schooldays, before the reserve was established, and I had seen how a fence and no management could be harmful to a rare plant. Under the Cotteswold Naturalists there was a warden but no management was done for 28 years! I was so worried about it that I decided to get advice from the then Nature Conservancy's Regional Officer, J. H. Hemsley, a sound ecologist and a personal friend. In 1961, Jim Hemsley, the Warden and I

visited the site in early June, flowering time of the buttercup, but none were to be seen. Jim suggested that management be carried out in the autumn, but the Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club took no notice. The following year, the G.T.N.C. took over responsibility for the reserve and a Management Committee was formed, with Sonia Holland as Secretary and me as Chairman. So our paths met.

Jim Hemsley's management regime was applied in the autumn of 1962 and the buttercup flowered well in 1963. It has been seen in flower nearly every year since then. Our official management plan was compiled largely by Sonia and approved by the Committee. She was a conscientious and enthusiastic Secretary. She also produced the *Badgeworth Nature Reserve Handbook*, full of historical and biological information and listing the known flora and fauna of this small reserve, a fine example of such a guide. It is now in its third, enlarged edition. As I was living in Surrey and later in Suffolk, the task of seeing that the necessary management was carried out fell on Sonia's shoulders. She negotiated with the owners a small addition to the Reserve, known as Warren's Pool, and arranged for a movable fence to allow stock into the pool at certain times.

Sonia was keen to publicise the Reserve and got it an entry in the *Guinness Book of Records* as Britain's smallest nature reserve, 346 square yards (290 m^2) together with television and national newspaper coverage. She also encouraged local people to take an interest. The Badgeworth W.I. produced a tie with the buttercup on it, and crowning the Buttercup Queen is the main event of the village fete!

When Sonia was staying with us in Suffolk in 1972, we were out botanizing and I showed her some fine trees of Black Poplar (*Populus nigra*), as I was starting to survey its distribution in England and Wales for the B.S.B.I. On her return to Cheltenham she 'got her eye in' for this tree and began to send me records, not only from her vice-counties, but also from other parts of the country. Sonia visited her son in Ireland from time to time, and when driving around the countryside there spotted several Black Poplars. These records, however, were not published, but were confirmed when Desmond Hobson visited Ireland in 1990 (*Watsonia* **18**: 303–305, 1991).

Sonia was interested in the development of the Gloucestershire Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (F.W.A.G.), and came to know the county advisor, John Hughes, who suggested that she should be his botanical advisor and accompany him when he was asked to visit farms. This she was pleased to do, as it gave her access to much private farmland where no botanist had previously trodden. This resulted in Sonia discovering new sites for a number of uncommon plants and she found several Black Poplars that could not be seen from public land. Gloucestershire F.W.A.G. was so grateful for her help and the advice she had given to farmers on their wildlife habitats, that it agreed to publish the results of her county Black Poplar survey as *The Black Poplar in Gloucestershire* (1992). In this work she recorded and localised 355 trees, many of them pollarded, all of which but one she had seen and described herself, "a labour of love", as the county F.W.A.G. president states in his foreword.

Sonia took a great interest in her local flora and discovered where most of the rarities grew and assisted their conservation. She travelled to London specially to see a solicitor regarding the threatened woods near Tewkesbury where the rare *Cynoglossum germanicum* (Green Hound's-tongue) grew, and succeeded in convincing him that the woods should be conserved. She personally encouraged the commoners of Painswick Beacon to remove dozens of seedling pines which were invading and smothering the best sites for *Herminium monorchis* (Musk Orchid) in the county, and she kept an eye on *Cephalanthera rubra* (Red Helleborine) in all its secret sites. She was delighted when *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting) was rediscovered on Cleeve Clond, where I had seen it in the early 1920s.

Sonia's outstanding contribution to British botany was her work on the composition of the *Supplement to the Flora of Gloucestershire*, helped by her two friends, Miss Caddick and Mrs S. Dudley-Smith. Sonia decided on the format, selected the beautiful colour plates, edited the text and saw through its production. It is, in my opinion, a model of what a supplement to a county Flora should be.

Sonia was a member of the British Trust for Ornithology (B.T.O.) and she used to help the county bird recorder, Dennis Mardle, do the monthly B.T.O. waterfowl count on the numerous flooded gravel-pits of the Cotswold Water Park in the Upper Thames catchment area. She and Dennis Mardle jointly published *Bird watching in the Cotswold Water Park*, a booklet much in demand amongst birdwatchers. It was in the Water Park that she developed her interest in dragonflies, which

resulted in her *Distribution of the dragonflies of Gloucestershire* (1991), a very good account, with much information about particular habitats.

Sonia was very unhappy about the future of the splendid wild daffodil bank at Ketford in the Leadon Valley, which had come on the market. The daffodils grew in species-rich meadows with other interesting plants such as *Gagea lutea* (Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem). She tried to get the G.T.N.C. to buy the site but the Trust was not interested, as the bank had no vehicular access. So eventually, following the example of that pioneer conservationist G. W. Hedley, who in 1932 bought the Badgeworth buttercup site with his own money, she purchased the freehold of the Ketford Daffodil Bank. It had been neglected for some years and Sonia, assisted by John Hughes, returned it to a satisfactory condition. It gave Sonia great pleasure to feel that she had been able to save this splendid wildlife site for future generations to enjoy.

Some years ago Sonia suggested to me that a very old, nearly dead, pollarded *Salix fragilis* (Crack-willow) in the Badgeworth Reserve might be replaced by a pollard Black Poplar. This was put to the Management Committee and was agreed. Sonia obtained a cutting from a local male tree, rooted it and planted it in the Reserve in March 1973. It grew well, but nobody knew how large a sapling had to be before its first pollarding. However, I discovered that John Evelyn in 1664 advised cutting a sapling off at the required height when it was as thick as one's arm: this Sonia did in March 1992. Sadly she did not live to see the development of the pollard. At the 1993 meeting of the management Committee it was agreed that this Badgeworth Black Poplar should be treated as a memorial to Sonia Holland, who had done so much to conserve Adder's-tongue Spearwort and so many other plants over the last 30 years.

E. MILNE-REDHEAD

SONIA HOLLAND: IN MEMORIAM

Sonia was cremated in Cheltenham on 21 January 1993. The service was taken by her neighbour, the Rev. Walter Jennings, Vicar of All Saints' Church. In his address he talked about the life-history of a dragonfly, when the nymph, having lived at the bottom of a pond for some time, climbs a reed stem and eventually emerges as a mature dragonfly to live thereafter in the air and sunshine but unable to rejoin the other nymphs underwater. He said he was telling this story for Emily and Anthony Sonia's grandchildren, but I think it was enjoyed by everyone else in the large congregation particularly those who had helped in her Odonata recording.

Her son, Clive, chose Mothering Sunday as the day to scatter her ashes on her Daffodil Bank at Ketford. A large party of family and friends met in the village to walk to the reserve on the south bank of the River Leadon. Passers-by would have dismissed the gathering as just another field meeting – about 50 people in wellingtons with anoraks and field glasses. Hundreds of daffodils were flowering on this beautiful and peaceful bank. While Clive scattered the ashes over a large area of the reserve we talked to friends or enjoyed strolling about. We saw non-flowering plants of *Gagea lutea* (Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem) on the reserve and several good specimens flowering outside. Two large *Populus nigra* (Black Poplar) pollards upstream reminded us of yet another of Sonia's study subjects. Despite the sad circumstances, this really was an enjoyable morning in a lovely setting with the promise of spring and summer to come. I like to think that Sonia would have enjoyed and been touched by the occasion. She would also probably have approved of the fact that we repaired to the Rose and Crown on the way home.

S. DUDLEY-SMITH

BRIAN THOMAS STYLES
(1934–1993)

Brian Styles was born on 26 September 1934 at Chedworth in the Cotswolds and died at Oxford of a heart attack on 27 June 1993. He was educated at Westwoods School, Northleach, Gloucs., and Wadham College, Oxford, where he read Botany. He remained at Oxford as a research student and

worked at Oxford University's Forestry Institute (formerly the Commonwealth Forestry Institute, now part of the Department of Plant Sciences) throughout his career. His research revolved around the study of tropical trees, but his meticulous study of *Polygonum aviculare* (Knotgrass) and its allies will have made his name familiar to many members of the B.S.B.I., to whom he was a conscientious referee for the genus.

His D.Phil. thesis, submitted in 1959, was supervised by the late E. F. ('Heff') Warburg, one of the century's most gifted and influential British plant taxonomists and co-author, with A. R. Clapham and T. G. Tutin, of the much loved 'CTW' *Flora*. Brian successfully elucidated the taxonomy of the *Polygonum aviculare* group, that apparently intractable assemblage of annual weeds and pauciennial plants of strandline communities. His account of them, published in *Watsonia* **5**: 177–214 (1962), remains the basis of that published in April 1993 in the revised first volume of *Flora Europaea*. Warburg, who died in 1962, said that the thesis was the best he had seen in Oxford and more recent revisions of the classification of *Polygonum aviculare* sensu lato by botanists in northern and central Europe, Italy and North Africa have failed to add appreciably to that elucidated by Brian. He was for more than 30 years the Society's referee for the *Polygonum aviculare* group, latterly jointly with myself.

Brian joined the staff of the Forestry Institute in 1960 as a Research Assistant sponsored by the Colonial Welfare and Development Office (now subsumed within the Overseas Development Administration), later becoming the Department of Forestry's Senior Research Officer and Forest Botanist. He was employed as a tropical forest botanist long before the current concern and enthusiasm for the conservation of the world's threatened tropical forests. Brian was a botanist of the old school, a diligent researcher who published infrequently but well, a scholar, a linguist and a field botanist. In the best tradition of Oxford and Cambridge, he threw himself vigorously into the general work of his Department and the wider world of botany – teaching, supervising, editing and contributing to the work of the various committees that punctuate the routine of academic life. He gave information freely and generously to all his colleagues.

He will be remembered especially for his studies on the tropical forest trees of the family Meliaceae, notably in collaboration with Dr T. D. Pennington, with whom he produced *A generic monograph of the Meliaceae* (*Blumea* **22**: 419–540, 1975), a conspectus of the genus *Acacia* in Somalia (with A. S. Hassan) and his monographic work on tropical pines. His contribution on *Pinus* to *Flora Neotropica* was sadly unfinished at the time of his death. A 1976 conference volume on *Variation, breeding and conservation of tropical trees*, that he edited with J. Burley for the Linnean Society of London, remains a seminal work on the study of tropical forests.

He had a particular interest in nomenclature and served for many years on the committee for the nomenclature of cultivated plants. He was deeply concerned about the conservation of the earth's diminishing genetic resources, both in the wild and in cultivation. In September 1984 he organised a most successful conference at Oxford on intraspecific variation, under the auspices of the Systematics Association, the Royal Horticultural Society and other bodies, the proceedings of which were published under his editorship as *Infraspecific classification of wild and cultivated plants* (Systematics Association Special Volume 29, 1986).

In 1966 he married Cynthia Large, who was both wife and much valued secretary, not least in her help with the 'nuts-and-bolts' organisation of successful conferences. They have a son, Jonathan. Although not latterly connected with an Oxford College, Brian enjoyed the traditional university life of lively conversation and good food and wine. A courteous, kindly and deeply religious man, who rightly insisted that we began a symposium dinner with the appropriate Grace, he reminded me of a jolly abbot. I warmed to him immediately when first I knocked cautiously on his office door in the late 1970s to discuss our mutual polygonaceous interests. He was friendly to all those around him, not least the countless students from Britain and overseas whom he encouraged and helped. He was deeply sympathetic to the problems of the younger taxonomist, unable to obtain employment in the contemporary academic world. He loved a good gossip and on my visits to Oxford from Reading to work in the Fielding-Druce herbarium he would sidle up with a mischievous grin to ask "Is it true that Professor Heywood is about to leave Reading?" or merely to enquire about the progress of a younger colleague to the altar. He enlivened all those in his Department with his sense of humour.

Brian's research demonstrated the vital links between academic knowledge, economic resources and conservation. His early death deprives the botanical community of a scholar and gentleman at a

time when plant taxonomy, beset by hostile forces, needs all the good people it can muster, especially in our Universities.

J. R. AKEROYD

IRENE MARY VAUGHAN
(1889–1993)

With the death of Irene Vaughan, M.A. (Oxon), M.B.E., F.L.S., on 27 January 1993 in her 104th year, the Botanical Society of the British Isles has lost not only its oldest member – indeed only the second centenarian of the Society's membership – but one of the most respected and foremost of field botanists in Wales of recent decades. Unlike H. N. Ridley (1855–1956), the B.S.B.I.s other centenarian, Mrs I. M. Vaughan was not a professional botanist. She had read history at St Anne's College, Oxford (1908–1911) but, as a woman, had not been permitted to take her degree 'officially'. Times changed, and so, when she was 86, her degree was duly conferred.

As Irene Mary Rope, she was born and 'raised' in Shrewsbury, where her doctor father was in

FIGURE 1. Mrs Irene M. Vaughan at Dryslwyn Castle, Carmarthenshire, 7 April 1978. (Photograph courtesy of W. Condry.)

practice with a Dr Burd, one of whose nine daughters he married. Irene must have accompanied her father on his rounds in pony and trap, and it is known that he greatly encouraged her, the youngest of his six children, in her love and enthusiasm for flowers and all wildlife; but he died when she was only nine. His family came from Suffolk (near Woodbridge) and much-loved visits were made to the family home there for many years – her earliest memory is said to be of butterflies and Zinnias in this Suffolk garden.

When World War I came, Irene joined a British team driving ambulances in Serbia. Then, joining the newly formed W.R.N.S., she was posted to Gibraltar, rapidly promoted, awarded the M.B.E. (Military), and was one of the first W.R.N.S. officers to serve overseas. Here in Gibraltar she met her future husband, a naval officer, one of whose duties was to test Irene in coding; this she did without error. Such meticulous attention to detailed exactitude stood her in good stead in later years and was surely the foundation of her precise keeping of plant records and data of all kinds, and of her ability to retain the voluminous character detail of the Roses, which became her speciality.

Meanwhile she had married Captain H. R. H. Vaughan R.N. whilst they were both still serving in Gibraltar; and it was here that their infant son died. In later years there were occasional visits to her husband during his three-year postings overseas; one was to the West Indies, and on another the high point must have been the desert picnic with the Emir of Kuwait when uncooked sheep's eyes were the special delicacy on offer.

Sadly, in 1938, their daughter died on the eve of her fifteenth birthday, and it was then that the move to Wales followed. Here, in a valley that the daughter had loved, Irene ran, single-handed throughout the war, the small farm at Rhandirmwyn near Llandovery, Carmarthenshire, until Capt. Vaughan's retirement in 1945.

It was now that both the Vaughans became involved in so many aspects of conservation, environmental 'welfare' and 'wildlife' organizations in Wales. He was closely concerned with revitalizing the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales with her support, but foremost was their work in rescuing the Red Kites of the upper Tywi valley from oblivion. Throughout the war, Mrs Vaughan had "carried out the greater part of the work of locating nesting pairs and verifying results" (H. M. Salmon, in Lacey, W. S. (ed.), *Welsh Wildlife in Trust*, pp. 67–79, Bangor, 1970) and gaining the co-operation of land-owners and farmers. In the early post-war years she and Capt. Vaughan were carrying the whole burden of the organisation of Kite conservation – he was Chairman of both an earlier and a later Kite Committee. For their immense services to Red Kite protection over 30 years and more, they jointly received first the R.S.P.B.'s Silver Medal and then their Gold Medal (cf. R. Lovegrove, *The Kite's Tale*, Sandy, Beds., 1990).

The West Wales Field Society (later Naturalists' Trust) was another joint concern, with Capt. Vaughan co-editing the first few issues of their journal, *Nature in Wales* (1955–1956). Mrs Vaughan had organized a short-lived 'Botanical Association' by then, and later was mainly responsible for starting their Carmarthenshire Branch. She undertook various surveys on this Society's behalf, and in 1971 helped pioneer the Farm Nature Reserve Scheme which the Reserve Committee of this branch had formulated. She served on the then Nature Conservancy's Committee for Wales (1958–1960) and made a botanical survey and site quality report for a prospective National Nature Reserve on the Castle Martin Tank Range. In 1965, with T. A. W. Davis, she visited and reported on the prospective Nature Reserve status for Ramsey Island. Her spirited submission was largely instrumental in saving the floristically rich Towyn Burrows from threat from the Ministry of Defence. In 1967 she partook in the opposing, by the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales, the Nature Conservancy and the B.S.B.I.'s Conservation Committee, of the construction of a road through Kenfig Burrows, Glamorgan. She was much concerned with safeguarding the upper Tywi valley from the threat of forestry and later from the Llyn Brianne reservoir project. She had worked closely with Dafydd Davies in opposing the building of the dam, giving evidence at the inquiry on behalf of the B.S.B.I. and the Brecknock County Naturalists' Trust. The *Quercus petraea* woods at Allt-rhyd-y-groes became a National Nature Reserve chiefly as a result of her reports, and near Rhandirmwyn are the R.S.P.B. reserves of Gwenffrwd and Dinas; near Cilycwm a Roadside Verge Nature Reserve protects *Epipactis helleborine* (Broad-leaved Helleborine).

Irene Vaughan was primarily a field botanist, with Carmarthenshire (v.c. 44) as her central interest. Here she explored extensively, gaining a wide knowledge of the flora. She joined the B.S.B.I. in 1952, and the start of the Maps Scheme must have been an added incentive for her. In addition to her own contribution, as County Referee, she checked all the field cards from v.c. 44 for

the *Atlas of the British flora* (1962). She also edited the botanical notes and plant records for West Wales in the early issues of *Nature in Wales* (1955–1956). Increasing involvement with the B.S.B.I. in Wales followed: she had been local secretary for v.c. 44 (1955) and District Secretary for South Wales (1961–2), and then became vice-county Recorder (v.c. 44) in 1961, a post she held until 1978, just before her retirement to Suffolk in early 1979. From its inception she was on the B.S.B.I.s Welsh Committee, for which she was Representative to the Council from 1962–1970. When the Regional Committee for Wales was set up in 1962, Mrs Vaughan took the Chair at its first Annual Meeting and A.G.M. in September 1963, and was Vice-chairman until 1965. Subsequently she acted as joint and then general secretary up to 1970, and edited the *Welsh Region Bulletin* (later *B.S.B.I. Welsh Bulletin*) from 1971–1976, jointly with S. G. Harrison. She led many B.S.B.I. Field Meetings: to Llanstephan (1967), Towyn Burrows (1969), Kidwelly (1970), and in 1967 to the Upper Tywi Valley, visiting the Sessile Oakwood at Pen-y-rhiw-iâr (by the Allt-rhyd-y-groes N.N.R.), the site of the then proposed Llyn Brianne dam, and the Rhandirmwyn School Nature Reserve (later submerged). Carreg Cennan was another favourite haunt and on these and other occasions many new records were made which led to articles in the *Welsh Region Bulletin*, *Nature in Wales* or *Watsonia*. These are listed in the bibliography, below. These articles were succinct and concerned only the most outstanding finds. They were presented in their wider-than-Wales significance and their ecological, distributional, historical or taxonomic setting. Her numerous records, many of them new for the county, made a major contribution to R. F. May's *List of the flowering plants and ferns of Carmarthenshire* (1969); they are now in the safe-keeping of the present vice-county recorder, Richard Pryce. Many of her records too appeared in T. A. W. Davis' *Plants of Pembrokeshire* (1970).

Mrs Vaughan was widely acknowledged in Wales and beyond for her expertise at the determination of the wild species of *Rosa*, from at least the early 1960s onwards. This special interest must have been aroused early: perhaps during the last war, when she is known to have organized the collecting and making by the Women's Voluntary Service of rose hip and other wild fruit jams and jellies in a back room of her Rhandirmwyn home. She pioneered the study of *Rosa* in Carmarthenshire and already in 1953 had contributed 36 specimens for Sylvester Bradley's ill-fated Rose Survey of 1952–1954 (R. J. Gornall & A. Primavesi, *Watsonia* **17:** 356–359, 1989; R. J. Gornall, pers. comm. 1993). All came from Rhandirmwyn, and comprised six or more determinable taxa including hybrids; her *R. obtusifolia* specimen was one of the only five represented in the near-thousand surviving from the country-wide survey. By 1955 she had already made at least two *Rosa* records new to v.c. 44. Consulted widely long before becoming an official Referee (1975–1984), at first jointly with R. Melville and later with G. G. Graham as well, she had published (1965) an excellent key and synopsis on the "Recognition of the Roses" for taxa known or likely to occur in Wales. Although a follower of A. H. Wolley-Dod, she understood the limitations of his system and that many of his plethora of varieties and forms would ultimately become recognized as hybrids, and was well aware of the peculiarities of the genetical complications in this genus. Her penultimate publication, in 1982, was a digest of the 13 Suffolk taxa of *Rosa*, three of which she had added herself to the county flora, with yet another later that year; all this in her three years Suffolk residence at over 90. She was asking for the latest *Rosa* news just weeks before she died: what joy the *Rose Handbook* would have given her!

In 1962 Mrs Vaughan was responsible for tuition in Rose identification at the Critical Plants course held at Preston Montford Field Studies Centre. In 1962 too, Mrs Vaughan was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London, and in 1971 held office in Sect. K at the Swansea meeting of the British Association. She was also instrumental in setting up the Llanelli Naturalists in 1971/2.

Mrs Vaughan's collections of *Rosa* are in the Welsh National Herbarium at Cardiff (**NMW**), with further specimens at the Ipswich Museum (**IPS**). Altogether she donated over a thousand flowering plants and ferns to **NMW**, as well as a number of bryophytes and lichens: most were from Wales, both north and south. Her interests covered a wide range of living things: on perhaps her last 'excursion' – to Dunwich – in late 1991, she showed delight in the fungi there. Dogs 'appear' throughout her life, from those early days in Gibraltar when she had a police summons for "unlawfully suffer[ing] a dog to be at large in a public highway"! Horses were another great love: she would extol the advantages of botanizing from horseback. And then we hear of mid-night visits to comfort a sick bull.

Irene Vaughan's friends and admirers have many affectionate memories. Although outwardly

maybe intimidating to some, she gave unstinting encouragement and help to many a young botanist who recall – inter alia – her agility in scrambling up (and slithering down) steep slopes more easily than many half her age. Local legends abound – trundling bee-hives through the village at Rhandirmwyn, with Dafydd Davies, in a cloud of angry escaping bees; 'Mrs Vaughan's corner' – a sharp turn on the way to Llandovery invariably taken on the inside in her Mini, and other adventures in her unstable 'Bubble-car' in the 1960s. There are fond memories of fluttering leaves of her precious copy of 'Wolley-Dod' escaping in the Welsh wind (retrieved by younger members); the generosity with which she took so many young and inexperienced to see highlights of the Carmarthenshire flora, outings with local friends and the rush back to get Capt. Vaughan's 4 o'clock tea. There were 'immediate' delicious refreshments – "Oh! the Aga does them". This hospitality continued in Suffolk well into her late 90's – three-course meals, complete with sherry, coffee (and no washing up) for visitors from Wales. Although frustrated by increasing deafness and poor sight, her botanical enthusiasm continued to the end. Always a keen gardener, as witness the gardens at Rhandirmwyn and Cilycwm, and later at Woodbridge she extended her garden when 95 and planted a special *Sorbus domestica* (Service-tree) when 98; her nephew observes that she was still active in the garden up to six months before she died. By the time she reached 97 she remarked: "I don't like people to know I'm so old – they're beginning to look at me as if I were Exhibit A". For her 100th birthday she insisted on no publicity, no presents, or "for it to be thought that it made her more than one day older". A lunch party was held, with over 80 friends and relatives; the display of documents and photographs covering her life are now gathered in a commemorative album: a telegram from the Queen, a special Apostolic Blessing from the Pope, greetings from the Director of W.R.N.S. and many environmental and botanical organizations. The 'locals' from Rhandirmwyn and Cilycwm held a party. A special issue (**48**) of the *Welsh Bulletin* had articles recalling her life in Wales and photographs of her in the field aged 88, 89 and 96.

Her's was a remarkable, long and active life of service to Wales, its Roses and Kites and its lovely countryside. She gave credit to others but eschewed it for herself. It was a privilege to know her. The wife of Sir J. E. Smith, Lady Pleasance, likewise lived to 103, alert to the last, and held 'I am for inquiry': such was Irene Vaughan. Three botanical colleagues were at her funeral – the Mass in her beloved Latin. As William Condry wrote (*The Guardian*, 30 January 1993) "there must still be people living in . . . the beautiful country of the upper Tywi river who remember seeing this small figure on a large white horse disappearing up the tracks towards the hills. Perhaps Irene Vaughan, as a lone horse rider ever searching for her beloved kites, will pass into local legend."

I am indebted to her nephew, Crispin Rope, and sister-in-law, Mrs L. D. Rope, for personal details and for making available the commemorative volume, also to her many friends and admirers, from Wales and Suffolk, who supplied information and memories.

A. P. Conolly

PUBLICATIONS OF IRENE VAUGHAN

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1976 [ED. MRS I. M. VAUGHAN] *Sorbus torminalis* in Powys, Cardigan and Carmarthenshire. *B.S.B.I. Welsh Region Bulletin* **25**: 4–6.
1976 Of conservation interest. *B.S.B.I. Welsh Region Bulletin* **25**: 9–10.
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1979 The decline of *Liparis loeselii* (L.) Rich. var. *ovata* on Towyn Burrows, Dyfed. *B.S.B.I. Welsh Bulletin* **30**: 8–10.
1981 Obituary: Thomas Arthur Warren Davis (1899–1980). *Watsonia* **13**: 357–358.
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1985 Notes on the identification of species in the genus *Rosa* in Carmarthenshire. *Llanelli Naturalists' Newsletter*, June 1985.

EDGAR DUNSTAN WIGGINS
(1911–1993)

Edgar Wiggins, an Honorary Member of the Botanical Society of the British Isles, was born on 12 September 1911 and died on 23 January 1993. A Londoner born and bred, Edgar was educated at Latymer School, Hammersmith, and the University of Reading, where he graduated in 1932 with a B.Sc. in Agriculture. At that time, as now, jobs in botany were hard to find so he stayed on at Reading to take a post-graduate course in Education, after which he taught for some years at Fairlop Upper School, Ilford. In 1940, during World War II, he joined the staff of Seal Hayne Agricultural College, Devon, and worked subsequently for the Ministry of Agriculture on problems of home food production – particularly potato blight. After the war, Edgar was Manager of Bayer Agricultural's Crawley Research Station, then Liaison Officer on the construction and development of Fison's new Levington Research Station, and later Manager of Fison's Head Office Library and Technical Information Department.

Communication, both written and verbal, was one of Edgar's special talents, and one of his main interests outside work was in amateur dramatics. Another interest was gardening, and he was a founder member of Fison's Gardening Club, for whom he edited *Rakings*, the Club's newsletter, for some 20 years. For some 35 years during the Cold War period he was involved in the scientific aspects of Civil Defence. After taking a course at Cambridge University he became the Senior Scientific Intelligence Officer for the East Suffolk Civil Defence Corps. Later he became directly responsible to the Home Office as Scientific Adviser on Civil Defence for the Eastern Region. He also became joint editor of a periodical, *Fission Fragments*, produced for the information of Civil Defence scientists throughout the U.K.

Edgar joined the B.S.B.I. in 1957, and when the Society was in need of an Editor for *B.S.B.I. News* his offer of editing experience in technical journalism was accepted, and he was then Hon. Editor of 28 numbers of *B.S.B.I. News*, from April 1977 (No. 15) to April 1986 (No. 42). He then became known to us as Wiggy – at the time he lived at 'Cowpasture Farm' and when asked how he would like to be addressed, he replied: "Wigginius pascum-vaccarum – the general usage is *Wiggy*, free from any and all – an informal colloquialism, used universally; it comes naturally and trips easily off the tongue. *Edgar* – generally used by those with a professional relationship . . . *Dunstan* –

restricted, as far as possible to family and intimates. (But don't take this too seriously. I respond to 'Darling' or 'Hi you' from anyone.)"

During his years as Editor he furthered the scope, success and popularity with members, which *B.S.B.I. News* enjoys today, and he particularly promoted the use of plant drawings as illustrations. For these he sought and encouraged artists who donated their skills to *B.S.B.I. News*, contributing to a significant collection of plant drawings which is building up through the years. We all remember Wiggy during his time as Editor as a notable character at B.S.B.I. meetings, with his neat beard and friendly approach to all his potential authors and contributors, and he stamped his own brand of humour and communication on to *B.S.B.I. News*.

Failing eyesight forced him to resign and sadly he became blind in 1987. In his last years he was totally chairbound – a disability which must have been extremely frustrating to such a volatile spirit. His wife Julia nursed him throughout and we extend our sympathy to her in her loss.

M. Briggs