

Report

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 17 MAY 1997

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the Dorset County Museum, High West Street, Dorchester, by kind invitation of the Curator, Mr Richard de Peyer, at 11.00 a.m. The President, Mr D. A. Pearman took the Chair in the presence of 112 members.

Apologies for absence were read and Minutes of the 1996 Annual General Meeting, published in *Watsonia* 21: 301-303 (1997), were accepted as correct, approved and signed by the President.

REPORT OF COUNCIL

The President took members through the Report of the Council, which had been previously circulated to members, commenting on the main achievements of the Society during the year, including the progress of Atlas 2000 and the computerisation of vice-county recorders. Mr R. G. Ellis was congratulated on producing his first Annual Report and Mr M. Walpole on his 26th and final Treasurer's Report and Accounts. The adoption of both Reports was proposed by R. M. Burton, seconded by R. M. Walls and accepted unanimously.

RULE CHANGES

The President explained the reasoning behind the proposed amendment to Rule 9 where Council had proposed a change from: "*The President shall be elected to serve for a term of two years and shall not be eligible for immediate re-election . . .*" to "*The President shall be elected to serve for a term of two or three years, according to the wishes of Council and the nominee on taking office, and shall not then be eligible for immediate re-election . . .*" After some discussion this amendment was proposed by C. A. Stace, seconded by A. O. Chater and carried with one opposing vote and some abstentions. As a result of this rule change, R. G. Ellis proposed and T. G. Evans seconded that D. A. Pearman be re-elected President for a further year and this was carried unanimously.

In introducing the proposed amendment to Rule 22, the President mentioned the outstanding contribution Messrs Grant Thornton had made to the successful running of the Society in auditing our accounts for the past 25 years. The proposal by Council to change Rule 22 was to give the Society flexibility when selecting a replacement for Messrs Grant Thornton. Council had proposed a change from: "*An auditor shall be appointed by the members at the Annual General Meeting and the accounts, having been audited by him, shall be approved by the Council before presentation to the next Annual General Meeting.*" to "*An Auditor or Independent Examiner shall be appointed by the members at the Annual General Meeting to report on the Financial Statements and Accounts which shall then be approved by Council before presentation to the next Annual General Meeting.*" The amendment was proposed by D. E. Allen, seconded by M. Walpole and carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT

The President commented on the importance to the Society of having experienced members as Vice-Presidents who could assist the Chair when necessary. He paid tribute to Mr M. Walpole who had done so much for the Society as Hon. Treasurer and Chairman of Publications Committee for over a quarter of a century. Mrs M. Briggs then gave an appreciation of Mr Walpole with whom she had worked so closely as Hon. General Secretary for almost the same quarter of a century. The election of Mr M. Walpole was proposed by the President, seconded by Dr S. L. Jury and carried

with acclamation. Mr Walpole then gave a short address in which he expressed his gratitude for being allowed to serve the Society for so many years.

ELECTION OF HON. GENERAL SECRETARY

Council had nominated Mr R. G. Ellis. His election was proposed by Mr T. G. Evans, seconded by Mr R. G. Woods and carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF HON. TREASURER

With the resignation of Mr M. Walpole there was a vacancy for the post of Hon. Treasurer. Council had nominated Mr M. E. Braithwaite. His election was proposed by Mr A. O. Chater, seconded by Miss E. Young and carried unanimously.

The President then warmly thanked the Editors of *Watsonia* and *B.S.B.I. news*, the compiler of *B.S.B.I. abstracts*, and all representatives on Council and other Committees for the hard work they carried out, voluntarily, on behalf of the Society. This was greeted by applause.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

In accordance with Rule 11 nominations had been received for Mr C. R. Boon, Prof. M. Crawley and Dr S. J. Whild. Profiles had been published with proposers and seconders, and election of these members was approved unanimously.

ELECTION OF HONORARY MEMBERS

The President mentioned that there was a slight break with tradition in that no fewer than five members had been nominated for Honorary Membership of the Society this year. All had made outstanding contributions to the Society and to field botany in general. Sponsors for all five gave short appreciations of their respective candidates (to be published in *B.S.B.I. news*) and their election was carried unanimously with warm applause.

The five new Honorary Members (and sponsors) were: Mr A. C. Jermy (Mr D. A. Pearman), Mr J. Ounsted (Miss A. Burns), Dr F. H. Perring (Mr M. Walpole), Dr F. Rose (Mr D. Streeter) and Mr P. D. Sell (Dr C. D. Preston & Dr S. M. Walters).

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

David Bellamy (President Wild Flower Society) and David Pearman (President B.S.B.I.) had both unhesitatingly recommended Richard Mabey for his *Flora Britannica*. Both Presidents thought this book quite superb and it had opened up botany to many people who would not otherwise have had an interest in the subject.

ELECTION OF HONORARY AUDITOR OR INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The President again warmly thanked Grant Thornton, West Walk, Leicester for their exemplary auditing of our accounts. Their decision not to seek re-election resulted in a vacancy. The new Hon. Treasurer Mr M. E. Braithwaite had approached one of his local "competitors", Mr John Coates, of Greaves West & Ayre, Chartered Accountants, Berwick upon Tweed, who had agreed to stand for

election. He was proposed by Mr D. A. Pearman, seconded by Mr J. Ounsted and carried unanimously.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12.40 p.m.

GWYNN ELLIS

FIELD EXCURSIONS HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE A.G.M.

Four field meetings were held over the weekend; all were very well attended, and we have to thank our leaders, Dr Sue Eden, Miss Anne Horsfall and Dr Humphrey Bowen for their sterling work.

FRIDAY 16 MAY, KINGCOMBE

This was meant to be a foretaste for early arrivals, yet over 50 members assembled for the walk, which was by courtesy of the Dorset Wildlife Trust, who own and farm the 158 ha reserve. Kingcombe is certainly one of the largest blocks of unimproved neutral grassland in southern England, and has very good numbers of plants, once common, but now rare outside reserves. The party saw *Genista anglica* (Petty Whin), *Pedicularis sylvatica* (Lousewort), *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's-tongue), the leaves of *Serratula tinctoria* (Saw-wort), *Succisa pratensis* (Devil's-bit Scabious) and *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* (Corky-fruited Water-dropwort), and a huge quantity of sedges, of which over 20 species occur here. There are good populations of Marsh and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries too. The highlight of the meeting was the discovery of a small patch of *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort) which, in Dorset, has only been seen once in the last 20 years. Sixty three members then found their way through the lanes to Frome St Quintin and tea and obligatory garden tours.

SATURDAY 17 MAY, WINFRITH HEATH

A coach load and some private cars met here for an early season heathland visit. The best area was a closely rabbit-grazed "village green", where *Cerastium semidecandrum* (Little Mouse-ear), *Crassula tillaea* (Mossy Stonecrop) (very frequent), *Ranunculus parviflorus* (Small-flowered Buttercup), *Trifolium micranthum* (Slender Trefoil), *T. ornithopodioides* (Bird's-foot Clover), *T. scabrum* (Rough Clover), *T. striatum* (Knotted Clover) and *T. subterraneum* (Subterranean Clover) were all found. Growing with them was a small patch of *Chamaemelum nobile* (Chamomile), now confined to three sites in Dorset. A little further on was *Eleocharis quinqueflora* (Few-flowered Spike-rush), but it was too early for *Radiola linoides* (Allseed) and *Anagallis minima* (Chaffweed).

On the heath itself there was little flowering, except some bushes of *Genista anglica* (Petty Whin), but the verges had *Geum rivale* (Water Avens), *Carex disticha* (Brown Sedge) and *Genista tinctoria* (Dyer's Greenweed). Some energetic members ventured into a bog to look at vegetative *Deschampsia setacea* (Bog Hair-grass), but again the heathland specialities such as *Gentiana pneumonanthe* (Marsh Gentian) and *Rhynchospora fusca* (Brown Beak-sedge) were not yet visible. A flush had *Carex pulicaris* (Flea Sedge), *Cirsium dissectum* × *palustre*, *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* (Southern Marsh-orchid), *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's-tongue) and *Sanguisorba officinalis* (Great Burnet).

The return to Dorchester was by way of Oakers Wood where there was still a good show of *Pulmonaria longifolia* (Narrow-leaved Lungwort) along the roadside verge.

Another smaller party of members met at West Bexington, at the westward end of Chesil Beach. *Crambe maritima* (Sea Kale) was in full flower, along with some *Glaucium flavum* (Yellow-horned Poppy).

The party was then invited to tea by Mr and Dr Eden, who have an extremely interesting Mediterranean shingle garden (with a good reptile fauna too). Many scarce plants such as *Lathyrus aphaca* (Yellow Vetchling), *Vicia parviflora* (Slender Tare) and *Petroselinum segetum* (Corn Parsley) are garden weeds here, and are well looked after.

SUNDAY 18 MAY, PORTLAND AND FERRYBRIDGE

A very large group, augmented by a few members of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, who had been our hosts the day before, met at Portland Heights. With the overnight mist

clearing one party went to St George's Reforne, where there is a large churchyard with *Arum italicum* subsp. *neglectum* (Italian Lords-and-Ladies); many naturalised plants including *Narcissus tazetta* (Bunch-flowered Daffodil), *Scilla peruviana* (Portuguese Squill) and *Gladiolus communis* (Eastern Gladiolus) were seen. Across the road is one of the quarry faces that holds *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (Maidenhair Fern). This party then proceeded to Church Ope Cove, a well-known botanical site. Here *Valerianella eriocarpa* (Hairy-fruited Cornsalad), *Polypodium cambricum* (Southern Polypody), *Linum bienne* (Pale Flax) and *Orobanche hederæ* (Ivy Broomrape) were seen along with some small patches of *Limonium recurvum* (Portland Sea-lavender). No *Gentianella anglica* (Early Gentian) plants were found, but on the way back a native site for *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (Maidenhair Fern) was shown.

The other party drove to Portland Bill. *Parapholis incurva* (Curved Hard-grass) grows on bare ground by the lighthouse and nearby is a long established clump of *Borago officinalis* (Borage). Walking eastwards along the coast there was much *Crithmum maritimum* (Rock Samphire), *Inula crithmoides* (Golden Samphire) and a magnificent stand of *Salvia verbenaca* (Wild Clary). The locus classicus of *Limonium recurvum* (Portland Sea-lavender) was admired, and then the party turned into one of the arable strips, where *Medicago polymorpha* (Toothed Medick) was found and *Trifolium squamosum* (Sea Clover). In the next field there was a mass of *Lathyrus aphaca* (Yellow Vetchling) and *Ranunculus parviflorus* (Small-flowered Buttercup). A walk behind the Pulpit Inn to find *Gentianella anglica* (Early Gentian) was unsuccessful, but here there was much *Thesium humifusum* (Bastard Toadflax) and a rich calcareous flora.

Lunch was held back at Portland Heights, where *Valerianella eriocarpa* (Hairy-fruited Cornsalad) was seen again. Then the group descended to Ferrybridge, where Chesil Beach joins the Isle of Portland. Despite roads, railways, car parks, visitors and windsurfers this is still an extremely rich site and the mass of *Armeria maritima* (Thrift) in flower made it extremely colourful. Here the party saw *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (Four-leaved Allseed), first recorded here in 1770, with *Phleum arenarium* (Sand Cat's-tail), *Trifolium scabrum* (Rough Clover) and *Vulpia fasciculata* (Dune Fescue). The car park held *Anthriscus caucalis* (Bur Chervil). Across the road, by the old railway line, was what looked like *Limonium recurvum* with *L. dodartiforme*, *Calystegia soldanella* (Sea Bindweed) and *Eryngium maritimum* (Sea Holly). Further on was a newly discovered very large patch of *Asparagus officinalis* subsp. *prostratus* (Wild Asparagus), which, like the *Polycarpon tetraphyllum*, has been known in the area for over 200 years. *Euphorbia portlandica* (Portland Spurge) and *Suaeda vera* (Shrubby Sea-blite) were also frequent here, along with a few plants of *Papaver dubium* subsp. *lecoqii* (Long-headed Poppy). Further on there were found huge drifts of *Anisantha madritensis* (Compact Brome), looking very fresh and reddish-green, and finally many plants of *Geranium purpureum* (Little Robin) and *G. rotundifolium* (Round-leaved Crane's-bill). Ice creams and tea rewarded those not already surfeited!

DAVID PEARMAN