Obituaries

JOHN ('JACK') GREGORY HAWKES 1915–2007

Potato taxonomist, biosystematist and genetic conservationist Professor J. G. Hawkes died in Reading on 6 September 2007. His death robs the international botanical and conservation communities of a supremely able researcher, practitioner and teacher, who, together with Sir Otto Frankel, did as much as anybody to put conservation of genetic resources centre stage as an applied scientific discipline. To this end he devoted a long and productive career to the study of the diversity and evolution of cultivated plants and their wild relatives. Born in Cam near Bristol on 27 June 1915, he was educated at Cheltenham Grammar School. As a boy he drew inspiration from exploring the countryside of the Cotswolds and remained an enthusiastic field botanist throughout his life. From school he went up to Christ's College, Cambridge, where in 1937 he graduated in Natural Sciences with 1st class Honours. He stayed on at Christ's for a PhD on the genetics and taxonomy of the potato, the world's fourth most important food crop (incidentally, 2008 is the Year of the Potato), which he would go on to research for more than six decades. Well before Hawkes had finished his PhD research, E. K. Balls and W. Balfour Gourlay invited him to join the British Empire Potato Collecting Expedition to South America. This journey, which took them on a meandering path through the Andes, from Argentina to Columbia but especially through Peru and Bolivia, resulted in the collection of 1164 potato samples – wild and domesticated species and landraces or local cultivated varieties. This considerable collection, a resource of useful genes for disease resistance and other attributes still used today, has been conserved at the Scottish Crops Research Institute, Invergowrie. Hawkes returned home in September 1939, via Halifax in Canada, just after war had been declared. Before setting off on his South American travels in December 1938, Hawkes had taken the opportunity to visit the Soviet Union to learn about wild potatoes from the specialists S. M. Bukasov and J. W. Juzepczuk at the All-Union Institute of Plant Industry in Leningrad. Here he was befriended by the visionary geneticist Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov

(1887–1943), who had originally proposed the concept of Centres of Crop Origins, global centres of crop diversity and evolution. Hawkes also met, in Moscow, T. D. Lysenko and warned Vavilov about the sinister intent of his colleague ("a dangerous man"), an ambitious, fraudulent and fanatical individual who drew his 'scientific' methods from Marxist-Leninist ideology and dogma. Denounced and hounded by Lysenko, Vavilov would die in prison during World War II, vaguely and falsely accused of espionage.

On his return from South America, Hawkes continued the research at Cambridge, completing his PhD in 1941. He was able to describe 31 new wild and five new cultivated potato species. He remained on the staff of the Commonwealth Bureau of Plant Breeding and Genetics until 1948. From there he returned to South America with his growing family to become the first Director (1948–1951) of the Colombian Ministry of Agriculture's new Potato Research Station in Bogota. In 1952, back again in the UK, he took up the post of lecturer in taxonomic botany at the University of Birmingham, where he remained for the rest of a distinguished career. Appointed Professor Plant Taxonomy (1961) and Mason Professor of Botany (1967), he remained head of the Plant Biology Department until his official 'retirement' in 1982.

He was always active in national and international organisations and committees. His greatest intellectual and practical contribution arose directly from his work on potatoes. In 1969 he established the influential MSc course 'Conservation and Utilisation of Plant Genetic Resources', which has since trained and inspired over 1,500 students from Britain and over 45 countries all over the world. In 1972, with his colleagues Erna Bennett and Sir Otto Frankel, Hawkes was instrumental in setting up the International Board for Plant Genetic Resources (I.B.P.G.R.) and the development of regional crop gene-banks now known as the CG Centres. Always a keen field worker, Hawkes took part in 15 potatocollecting expeditions, while always stressing the value of situ conservation for the protection and evolution of wild and landrace germplasm. He rightly appreciated how much crop plants need to be able to evolve in the presence of both wild relatives and natural pathogens.

Hawkes retained a broad range of botanical interests, from taxonomy, biosystematics and evolution to the origins of agriculture and management of genetic resources, and he published nearly 250 papers and books on potatoes, wider aspects of crop plant diversity and genetic conservation. A major research project was his taxonomic study, including the then innovative use of serology (proteinantibody reactions), of 230 wild species of potato. His books included The diversity of crop plants (1983), The potato: evolution, biodiversity and genetic resources (1990), The potatoes of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay (with J. P. Hjerting, 1969), The potatoes of Bolivia (1989), and with Birmingham colleagues, Plant genetic conservation: the in situ approach (1997) and The ex situ conservation of plant genetic resources (2000).

He joined the Botanical Society of the British Isles in 1953. Of particular interest to many B.S.B.I. members was his Flora of Warwickshire, *A Computer-mapped Flora*,

published in 1971. Since then the compilation of computer mapped plant records has become a standard procedure in the production of Local Floras. Hawkes also edited *The reproductive biology and taxonomy of vascular plants* (1967), the proceedings of the Society's 1966 Conference, which he had organised and convened in Birmingham. Hawkes's last book. *Hunting the wild potato in the South American Andes* (2004), a characteristically thorough exercise in tidying up unfinished business, took him back to that memorable expedition to South America, and also paid tribute to his friend and mentor Vaviloy.

Jack Hawkes was a modest person but held in great esteem by colleagues and former students. He had the gravitas of a professor but was a friendly man who would encourage younger botanists. In 1975 he received the International Botanical, Congress Medal, appropriately in Leningrad. In 1984 the Linnean Society of London, of which he later became President (1991–1994), awarded him their Linnean Medal for Botany. In 1984 Queen Elizabeth awarded him the O.B.E.

J. R. AKEROYD

JOHN OUNSTED 1919-2007

With the death of John Ounsted on 2 December 2007 our Society has lost a loyal supporter, and one of the rapidly diminishing band of field botanists who contributed not only to the first Atlas (1962) but also to its heavyweight successor 40 years later. Many of us have also lost a good friend – he was a man of great wisdom and energy, and his beaming smile and sense of fun, no less than his botanical insights, will be greatly missed.

John was born in London on 24 May 1919, and joined the Botanical Society and Exchange Club, the forerunner of the B.S.B.I., in 1947. His early interest in natural history, particularly in birds and plants, was nurtured by his experiences whilst a pupil at Winchester College; here, he found himself sharing a dormitory with John N. Mills. It was Mills – five years his senior – who introduced him to "mountains, Youth Hostels, but above all Botany" (Ounsted 2002). John spent much of his free time exploring the countryside within cycling distance of college, and the chalk grassland of Twyford Down was a frequent

haunt. In 1934, at the age of fifteen, he accompanied Mills to Snowdonia, where he gained his first experience of mountains and his first sighting of *Lloydia serotina* "... visible but inaccessible up a vertical cliff." They also botanised together close to their parents' homes, and one spring walked the Pilgrim's Way to Canterbury in just three days, where the finding of *Lathraea squamaria* led to a "... lively debate on whether the 'oo' in Toothwort was 'as in foot' or 'as in hoot'!". Later, when the two Johns both had children of their own, they took family camping holidays together, often by the sea and always, it seems, at locations deliberately selected to offer considerable scope for plant-hunting.

For John, botany was just one interest amongst many. Academically he was outstanding, and his great intellect and scholarship was combined with a genuine interest in people and an openness and approachability that was to win him friends wherever he went. A scholar at Winchester, and also at Trinity College, Cambridge, he earned a double first in

Mathematics and Moral Sciences. At about this time he developed an enthusiasm for Russian, teaching himself that language well enough to contribute translations to two anthologies of foreign classical poetry, much of the work for these being done while still at university.

John graduated in 1940, and left Cambridge a convinced pacifist. He was ready to go to prison, but after appearing before a call-up board was excused military service as a conscientious objector on religious conviction. Instead, he embarked on a lifetime in education: first as a Mathematics teacher at King Edward VI School, Birmingham; then, in 1948, as headmaster at Leighton Park, a small Ouaker boys' school on the outskirts of Reading. In Birmingham, during the War, there were few young male teachers, and John found himself teaching not only Maths but a whole range of other subjects and 'out of school' activities - it was at about this time that he became actively involved in the scout movement. It was also here, in Edgbaston and Bournville, that he met other conscientious objectors, many of them Quakers.

John and Irene married in 1940, within months of his graduation, and by the end of their time in Birmingham they already had four children. There were camping expeditions in the school holidays - to Norfolk, Somerset, Cornwall. Isle of Wight, the New Forest – and term-time forays nearer to home too. John's eldest daughter, Tanya, recalls her father heading off from their flat in Birmingham, vasculum under his arm; and at the end of the day Irene would take the plants he had found and use her water colour paints to colour the illustrations in Fitch's companion to Bentham's 'Handbook' (Fitch 1939), John then carefully annotating the drawings with dates and localities.

The decision to move to Leighton Park was a bold one - and we shouldn't underestimate the courage involved, of the school's governors as much as of John himself. On his appointment, at the age of 28, he was not only the youngest person on the school staff, he was also the youngest headmaster of an independent school in Britain. The son of a high Anglican, John was a man of deep religious beliefs, but he was not (and never did become) a member of the Society of Friends – he was the school's first non-Quaker headmaster, and the governors had to think long and hard before taking him on. As John noted, "legend has it that in the early days of Leighton Park, when Friends were strongly evangelical, the governors hesitated long over a



John Ounsted in his study at Leighton Park, c. 1954. (Photo: Leighton Park School archives).

candidate for the headship as they suspected he didn't believe in the Virgin Birth; and that 40 years later they hesitated over a candidate as they suspected that he did" (Ounsted 1990).

Leighton Park was to be John's home for the next 22 years. Plant-hunting holidays continued, and there were camping trips to Guernsey and Jersey in 1950, to the Isles of Scilly in 1951, and to Alderney and the west coast of Scotland (including Rum) in 1953. John's notes on Alderney's plants, together with additional records from David McClintock, provided the first reasonably comprehensive account of the island's flora since the German occupation (Ounsted 1954). Whether in school or with his growing family, John was determined to communicate his love of the outdoors, and of plants and birds in particular. In the 1950s and early 1960s he helped run the school's Bird Group - including an ambitious ringing programme – and compiled a check list of the vascular plants to be found within the school grounds. In his own garden, next to the school, he found one particularly noteworthy species: "In the autumn of 1954 I was weeding a herbaceous border that is usually left to my gardener when, to my great surprise, my nostrils were suddenly assailed by the unmistakeable odour of *Mentha pulegium...* A search revealed two patches of the plant in the weedy turf of the corner of the lawn on which I was kneeling" (Ounsted 1956).

Amidst all this activity, botanical or otherwise, he will chiefly be remembered within the B.S.B.I. as one of the co-founders (with Cecil Prime and Alick Westrup) in 1952 of the 'Junior Activities Committee'. John was instrumental in organising and leading many junior meetings, including trips to Austria (1956), the Mediterranean shores of France (1958) (Ounsted 1960), and – with Cecil Prime and James Cadbury - Switzerland and Italy (1968) (Cadbury 1968). Several long-serving members of the B.S.B.I. found their way into botany thanks to these field meetings, and John remained a member of the Committee until its eventual demise in 1969. In the 1950s he was also the Society's 'local secretary' in North Hampshire (v.c. 12) and Berkshire (v.c. 22) – the recorders at that time for these vicecounties being E. C. Wallace and E. F. Warburg, respectively. He was later appointed to Council, and served the Society in this capacity from 1963 to 1967.

Alongside his botanical interests, of course, he had a school to run. At the end of the Second World War, Leighton Park was financially in a precarious position. It had huge debts, relatively high fees and an intake so small that those in the lower sixth and sixth forms numbered only 40 — hardly enough to offer the required choice of subjects or make a reputation for university entrance. By the time he left, 22 years later, the school was flourishing: the debts were paid off, numbers of pupils had gone up from about 200 to more than 300, the sixth form offered a full range of A levels, and the school could boast a disproportionately large Oxbridge entry. He had established its reputation as a highachieving 'progressive' school with a strong Quaker ethos and a distinctly 'modern' outlook - no corporal punishment, no fagging, and a clear emphasis on community service and overseas links - that was later to be emulated by many of the larger, and politically embattled, public schools in the 1970s and 1980s. And while other public schools were encouraging military service in school cadet corps Leighton Park ploughed a very different furrow, selling fudge to raise money to dig wells in India, adopting an elderly 1956 Hungarian refugee, and housing the Easter Aldermaston marchers for nuclear disarmament in the school gym.

His own subject was Mathematics – he had a particular enthusiasm for *polyhedra* – but when necessary he could turn his hand to a wide range of other subjects. He ran special essay

classes for sixth form students, and a Poetry Group, and helped to establish the school chess club. He also introduced 'hobby Russian' – which eventually led to the school's pioneering of Russian at GCE – and took a six week sabbatical in 1961 to visit Moscow and Leningrad. Curiously, he never taught botany, but we shouldn't be surprised that Leighton Park, with John's support, continued to offer A Level Botany (taught by Richard Schardt, himself an accomplished field botanist) long after most other schools had abandoned separate Botany and Zoology A Levels in favour of biology or environmental science.

Under his leadership Leighton Park gained a reputation for the study of natural history (particularly birds), and produced a string of boys who went on to specialise in the 'natural sciences' (Gould 1990). His ex-pupils include the botanists James Cadbury, Alistair Fitter, Quentin Kay, Simon Leach and John Richards, the lichenologist Dennis Brown, and entomologists John Brady and Martin Luff. Budding ornithologists abounded, and John's bird-watching 'old boys' include Philip Bacon, Stephen Baillie, Nicholas Blurton-Jones, Brian Dickinson, Humphrey Dobinson, Christopher Hancock, Michael Ounsted, Jeremy Sorensen, and the wildlife artist Robert Gillmor.

One boy to make his mark in the 1950s was Nicholas Blurton-Jones, who undertook a special study of Canada Geese at Englefield Park, near Theale, and then, while still at school, organised the BTO's first national census of that species. In the late 1950s four members of the school's Bird Group were planning an expedition to Ireland and it was suggested to them that they should try to visit Cape Clear Island. The Cape Clear Bird Observatory was established as a direct result of that trip, with Humphrey Dobinson, one of the original quartet, serving as the observatory's secretary for the first seven years.

Without doubt, John's enthusiasm mattered a great deal to his pupils. I well remember, as a shy 13 year-old, getting a short piece about the birds at Reading Sewage Farm published in *Animals* magazine. The achievement of 'being in print' was far less important to me than John's *recognition* of that achievement, and it was his evident delight — rather than the achievement itself — that made the deepest impression on me. Quite simply, if John was interested in something you'd done, then you knew it *must* have been something worth doing! His keen interest in the activities — and antics — of his 'old boys', long after they (and he)

had left the school, was quite remarkable, doubtless aided by a formidable memory. Leighton Park was a close-knit community, and amongst former pupils there was a great sense of loyalty to both the school and its headmaster. It is noteworthy that several chose to return to teach there, including James Cadbury (Zoology), Robert Gillmor (Art), Anthony Hodge (Art) and Michael Leach (Mathematics).

In 1970 John and Irene left Leighton Park and moved to Essex where, for eleven years, he was an HM School Inspector, doing much to raise standards and stimulate educational thinking in Outer London and Essex. Until 2001 he was a trustee of the Educational Trust Fund of the Mercers' Company, one of the richest of the London livery companies. And he remained one of the driving intellectual exponents of both boarding education, in which he believed deeply, and of the principle of choice and diversity. He was, over years, to change his views. Boarding, he came to feel, was not necessarily in tune with changes in society (Ounsted 1990); and towards the end of his time at Leighton Park his growing enthusiasm for co-education helped pave the way for the introduction of girls to the Sixth Form in the mid 1970s – something that fellow headmaster, old school friend and birding companion John Dancy had already pioneered at Marlborough College. He was a keen supporter of the school's later transition to full co-education.

Whilst in Essex, John continued to interweave his professional life with his numerous other interests, including botany. In customary fashion, he ensured that his botanical records found their way to those who would make best use of them. He contributed records to Stanley Jermyn's survey of the flora of Essex (Jermyn 1974), and took part in the B.S.B.I.'s Wild Service-tree survey. In 1982 he retired, and he and Irene moved from Essex to Woodgreen Common, a small and scattered hamlet on the western edge of the New Forest, overlooking the River Avon. Here, John immediately set about recording the flora of his local patch which straddled the Hampshire/Dorset border. In 1985 he was invited to join the Hampshire Flora Committee - an invitation which he gently declined, preferring to offer his services in other ways. He was regularly in contact with Paul Bowman, Lady Anne Brewis, Humphrey Bowen, Paul Stanley and others, and organised two B.S.B.I. field meetings in the New Forest (Ounsted 1985, 1986). Many of his records found their way into the Floras of Hampshire

(Brewis *et al.* 1996), Dorset (Bowen 2000) and the Isle of Wight (Pope *et al.* 2003). In 1986 he discovered *Filago arvensis* in Hampshire – a first record for the county, and only the sixth for Britain. He also had a fondness for *Fallopia dumetorum*, his records from both sides of the county boundary clearly demonstrating the importance of the area for this species (Brewis *et al.* 1996, Edwards & Pearman 2006) – which he delighted in calling 'Left-handed Bindweed' on account of its habit of twisting the opposite way to *Convolvulus arvensis* around the plants it climbs up (Ounsted 2006).

His continuing passion for overseas trips—especially to France—led him to participate in a number of B.S.B.I. field meetings and conferences, and he helped to organise a return visit to Alderney in 1995, 42 years after his first visit there. John served the Society in the capacity of Vice-president between 1989 and 1993, and was a member of Meetings Committee between 1991 and 1995. In 1997, 50 years after joining the Society, he was elected an Honorary Member in recognition of his contributions to British field botany and the life of the Society.

John was a slight, intense and charismatic figure, whose nickname at Leighton Park – 'The Duke' – seemed peculiarly apt. Teaching, and learning, was something of a compulsion, and he could never keep his intellectual curiosity to himself. Throughout his long life he was, indeed, a "champion of the young" (Burns 1997). In retirement he completed a 'total immersion' course in French at the University of Southampton, and became an authority on the works of the 19th century French novelist George Sand, reading all 10,000 of her published letters.

In June 2007, just eight weeks after his wife's death, he was invited back to Leighton Park to open a new Maths block, fittingly named in his honour 'The John Ounsted Building'. After watching the first lesson take place John made a short speech and formally cut the ribbon. All agreed, it was a most moving and joyful occasion. He was, to the end, a man of extraordinary enthusiasm and energy, and will long be remembered with great warmth and affection. John's sense of humour was legendary, and it is typical of the man that he chose to list his recreational pursuits in *Who's Who* as botany, camping and "...being overtaken when motoring".

He is survived by a son and four daughters and their families, to whom we extend the Society's deepest sympathies. He was a lovely man who will be sorely missed.

ACKOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank members of John's family, in particular Tanya Hawley and Michael Ounsted, for their assistance in preparing this account. Thanks also to Ailsa Burns, Michael Leach and David Pearman for their comments on the draft. and to John Allinson and John Gould for tracking down a suitable photograph. I am especially grateful to Michael Binyon for allowing me to draw upon the obituary written by him which appeared in *The Times* on 21 December 2007.

REFERENCES

BOWEN, H. J. M. (2000). The Flora of Dorset. Newbury. Pisces Publications.

BREWIS, A., BOWMAN, R. P. & ROSE, F. (1996). The Flora of Hampshire, Colchester, Harley Books.

BURNS, A. (1997). Profiles of new Honorary Members. John Ounsted. BSBI News 76: 5.

CADBURY, C. J. (1968). Field Meetings, 1968. Switzerland and Italy. 28th July – 8th August (Junior Meeting). BSBI Proc. 7: 629-631.

EDWARDS, B. & PEARMAN, D. A. (2004), Dorset Rare Plant Register, An account of the rare, scarce and declining plants of Dorset. Dorchester, Dorset Environmental Records Centre.

FITCH, W. H. (1939). Illustrations of the British Flora. 5th ed., with additions by W.G. Smith and others. Ashford, Reeve & Co. Ltd.

GOULD, J. (1990). From Natural History to Wildlife, in: Leighton Park, the first 100 years, pp 117-122. Reading, Leighton Park School.

JERMYN, S. T. (1974). Flora of Essex. Colchester, Essex Naturalists' Trust.

OUNSTED, J. (1954). Notes on the flora of Alderney. B.S.B.I. Proc. 1: 142-151.

OUNSTED, J. (1956). Plant Notes. Mentha pulegium L. B.S.B.I. Proc. 2: 136-137.

OUNSTED, J. (1960). Field Meetings, 1958. April 7th to 20th. Banyuls-sur-Mer, Pyrénées-Orientales. B.S.B.I. *Proc* 3: 443–446. [Includes a humorous account of what John claims to have been the "first formal public speech on behalf of the B.S.B.I. to have been made in Lithuanian".]

OUNSTED, J. (1985). Field Meetings, 1983. New Forest, Hampshire. 3rd September. *Watsonia* **15**: 297–298.

OUNSTED, J. (1986). Field Meetings, 1984. New Forest, Hampshire. 4th August. *Watsonia* **16**: 115.

OUNSTED, J. (1990). Headmaster's Report: 1948–70. In: Leighton Park, the first 100 years, pp 20–24. Reading, Leighton Park School.

OUNSTED, J. (2002). Professor J. N. Mills – some personal memories. BSBI News 90: 30.

OUNSTED, J. (2006), A native annual unfamiliar as a garden weed, BSBI News 101: 24.

POPE, C. SNOW, L. & ALLEN, D. E. (2003). The Isle of Wight Flora. Wimborne, Dovecote Press.

SIMON J. LEACH

PETER CHARLES HALL (1917-2008)

Peter Hall died in Poole, Dorset, on 7 March 2008, a few weeks short of his ninety-first birthday and less than four years after his beloved wife Joan. During their 54 years of marriage they were an inseparable pair - at work, socially and in their botanical pursuits so many of the points made in Joan's obituary (Watsonia 25: 441–442, 2005) are equally applicable to Peter and mostly will not be repeated here.

Peter was born on 30 April 1917 in Southgate, now in London. He told me that he did not have a very happy childhood, either at home or as a boarder to Brentwood School, which he did not like, not enjoying either academic work or any sports. Most of his holidays he spent not at home but with his paternal grandparents in Poole. These were, he said, idyllic periods at a time before motor vehicles



Peter Hall, at his retirement in 1977

were common (though his father had a large car), and fond memories of the place were the reason for Peter and Joan's final move there in 1994. After school, with few qualifications, he briefly joined his father's accountancy business, but he did not take to that and in 1935 he took examinations and passed into the Scientific Civil Service as a chemist (chemistry being his favourite school subject). He was stationed at Woolwich Arsenal, specialising in petroleum products, but on the outbreak of war he was moved to an I.C.I. laboratory in Dumfries, returning to Woolwich at the end of the war. In 1946 he was seconded to Risley, Cheshire, where he took charge of the oil laboratory. It was there that he met Joan, a paint specialist, sharing with her a love of rambling in the northern hills and dales. They were posted back to Woolwich a few years later, and they married soon after in 1950, setting up home in Erith. Other secondments to the British Army and N.A.T.O. saw Peter working in Chessington, Paris and Brussels, and visiting further afield in Hong Kong. Joan retired in 1969, and Peter in 1977, aged 60, spending his last three years working in the Admiralty Oil Laboratory in Cobham, Kent. Within two years they moved to Monmouth, where they spent 15 happy years gardening, visiting National Trust properties (especially those with good gardens), and taking part in botanical excursions. Peter was always very interested in words, and they became expert crossword solvers, winning several national competions in the broadsheet newspapers and *The Listener*. Their library included many dictionaries and related works, including a forbidding series called Difficult Crosswords. Late in life Peter also took up Sudoku. He enjoyed watching sport, especially horse-racing, show-jumping and rugby.

Enthusiasm gained from reading J. E. (Ted) Lousley's Wild Flowers of Chalk and Limestone, and then a chance meeting with the man himself in the field at Box Hill, Surrey, persuaded them to join the B.S.B.I. in 1952. In the same year they joined the London Natural History Society, in which they became especially friendly with E.B. (Ted, or Bang) Bangerter, with whom they continued in correspondence after his emigration to New Zealand until his death in 2001. Peter became the Botanical Meetings Secretary of the L.N.H.S., taking pride in arranging trips to benefit from the cheap excursions offered by British Rail. One such that I attended was to the Lewes downs and levels in 1961. Peter and

Joan were among the founder members of the Kent Field Club in 1955. In 1979 W. T. Stearn sponsored Peter for election to Fellowship of the Linnean Society.

Peter served as a B.S.B.I. Council member from 1956 to 1959, as a member of Meetings Committee from 1955 to 1968, as a member of Records Committee from 1966 (when it commenced) to 1980, and, most importantly, as Honorary Field Secretary from 1956 to 1967. This last period took the Society through its first Atlas project and beyond. The post involved much effort in organising and liasing, two of Peter's strong points, and he claimed to have taken part in every field excursion of the B.S.B.I. in England and Wales while the Atlas data were being gathered. Additionally, he helped Francis Rose and Paul Jovet to organise a highly successful trip to France in July 1959, centred on Boulogne and Abbeville, our first official foreign excursion. In recognition of all his hard work for the B.S.B.I. he was elected an Honorary Member in 1967.

Peter and Joan became expert field botanists without ever forming an herbarium, and many less experienced people, myself included, benefited greatly from their help so willingly and graciously given. As mentioned above, they were very much a pair. Joan was very happy to remain more in the background, but she was undoubtedly the brains and driving force and she derived much pleasure from seeing Peter in the limelight. In the 1970s and 1980s they made trips to many botanical hotspots on the Continent, particularly Spain, the Alps, Jugoslavia and Crete, for which Peter made extremely detailed preparatory notes and



Left to right, Brenda Howitt, Leaver Howit and Peter Hall

206 OBITUARIES

Joan wrote extensive diary-style reports. Peter's most tangible contribution to botany was *Sussex Plant Atlas* (1980), completed just before they left the south-east for Monmouth and summarising the work of the Sussex Flora Committee from 1966 to 1978. His convivial nature and friendly smiling face, however, are more vivid in the minds of many of his friends and companions. Peter was known by all as a jovial character with a keen sense of humour and a thirst for knowledge, and he mixed well with everybody.

Two of the many friends that Joan and Peter made during the period of *Atlas* recording were R. C. L. (Leaver) and Brenda Howitt, authors of *A Flora of Nottinghamshire* (1963). Their obituaries can be found in *Watsonia* **15**: 417–419 and **14**: 291 respectively, but there were no

accompanying photographs. The larger photograph reproduced here shows Brenda, Leaver and Peter at a Scottish Field Meeting in 1955, planning the day's *Atlas* recording. The image of Joan (*Watsonia* 25: 442, 2005) used for her obituary was taken from the same group photograph (wrongly dated there as "around 1960").

We regret the passing of yet another of the B.S.B.I. 'old guard', those who were instrumental in the Society winning its spurs and moving into its 'golden age'. Neither Peter nor Joan had any siblings, and they had no children.

Peter himself provided me with many of the above details. I am also grateful to David Allen for reading a draft and for supplying a number of additional historical points.

CLIVE STACE