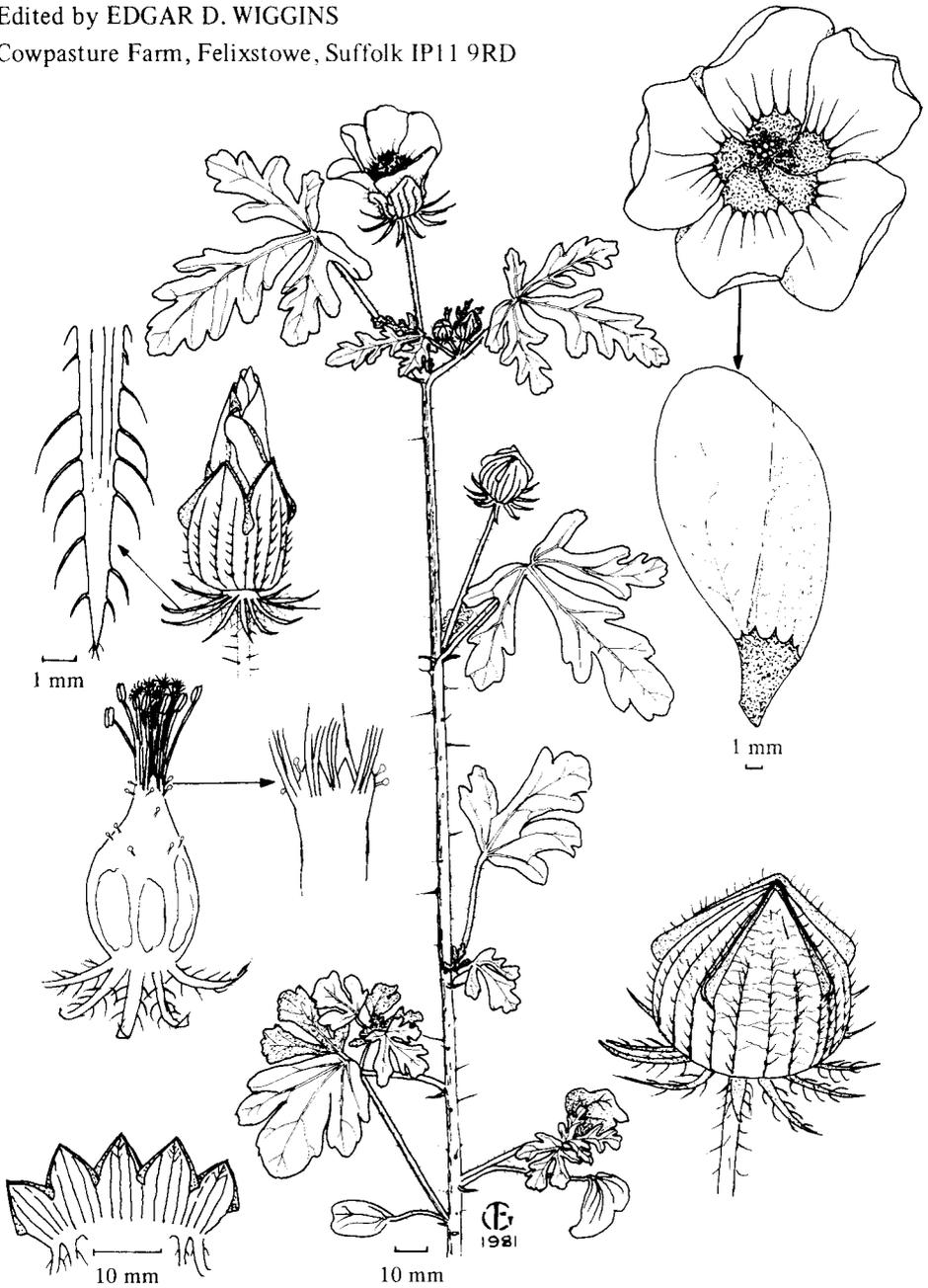


Edited by EDGAR D. WIGGINS

Cowpasture Farm, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 9RD



Hibiscus trionum del T.G. Evans © 1981 (see p. 23)

ADMINISTRATION

HON. GEN. SEC. (General Enquiries)

Mrs M. Briggs, White Cottage
Slinfold, HORSHAM, West Sussex RH13 7RG.

HON. TREASURER. (Payment of Subscriptions and change of address).

Mr M. Walpole, 68 Outwoods Road,
LOUGHBOROUGH, Leics. LE11 3LY.

(Please quote membership number on correspondence concerning membership or subscriptions).

HON. FIELD SEC.

(Information on Rare Plants, Field Meetings etc.)

Miss L. Farrell, N.C.C. P.O. Box 6,
Godwin House, George Street,
HUNTINGDON PE18 6BU.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Elections to Council

Nomination for vacancies on Council, in writing, signed by two members of the Society and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate to serve, if elected, should be sent to the Hon. General Secretary, White Cottage, Slinfold, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 7RG, to arrive BEFORE FEBRUARY 1st 1983.

Mary Briggs, Hon. Gen. Sec.

POSTCODES

The Society's address list of members on the Treasurer's computer is still missing quite a high proportion of postcodes. In areas where postal sorting is mechanised (as it is in the postal area of Redhill, Surrey, which includes Horsham, W. Sussex) we are warned that *outgoing* letters addressed without postcode may be delayed. If you have not sent in your postcode, please send this to Mr M. Walpole, 68 Outwoods Road, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3LY for the address list.

Contributions for inclusion in
BSBI News 33
must reach the Editor
BEFORE 10th FEBRUARY, 1983.

HON. GEN. SECRETARY'S NOTES

PUBLICATION DATES

We apologise for the late arrival of *Watsonia* 14:2 and *BSBI Abstracts* 12. Early in 1982 the printer unfortunately went into liquidation. Later the firm reopened and is now continuing with production of our Journals in the same format. The printing of 14:2 was considerably delayed during the re-organisation and negotiations over a new contract, but we are pleased to report that *Watsonia* 14:3 is on schedule, and we hope to publish this part in January or February, 1983. *Watsonia* 14:4 is also on schedule, and if there are no unexpected delays between now and then, this part should be published in July or August 1983.

A number of members wrote in early October reporting the non-arrival of the "September" number of *BSBI News*, 31. The date on each *BSBI News* is the month in which it is printed. For the September and December issues this is scheduled for the *second* half of the month, and after printing the 2,600 copies are stapled, transported from Felixstowe to Horsham, assembled with other items for that mailing, stuffed into the addressed envelopes and posted. This normally takes up to 2 weeks, with possibly a further week \pm in the post (2nd Class), so please expect your September issue in mid-October, December issue in mid-January; the April issue is linked with the Annual Report and Notice of AGM, so this number is normally both printed and posted in April.

NETWORK RESEARCH – Churchyards and other burial grounds

Some counties are not as yet taking part in this Survey. Any members who could volunteer to record some churchyards in their County are asked to contact their VC Recorder with this offer and survey forms will be sent on request to BSBI Dept of Botany BM (Nat Hist). Where complete or majority coverage is not feasible, records from selected churchyards of known botanical interest would be a good start for that county. Recorders are reminded that visits early in the year, before the first mowing, are particularly rewarding.

PRIZE WEEDS

Members may be involved in the organisation of village fetes, at some of which there is still a competition for the best collection of wild flowers. Substitution of a 'Best Collection of Garden Weeds' could be advised as an alternative, as satisfactorily recommended from Oundle.

The *Daily Mail* of 1.9.82 reported that the village of Eyam in Derbyshire had inaugurated an award for 'The Weed of the Year' which had been won this year, appropriately, by a Mr Plant. According to the report the winning weed had not been identified but the photograph of weed and winner was captioned "Jolly green giant".

David McClintock, reviewing *A Seventeenth Century Flora of Cumbria* in the *Wild Flower Magazine*, Autumn 1982 of the Wild Flower Society, comments on the fascinating old English names, picking as an example for Bistort "Eastern Magicians, a corruption of Eastermintgiants, itself a corruption of Easter + manger, what is eaten at Easter, the traditional use then of Bistort".

We are indebted to Dr David Briggs for drawing attention to papers in Reports of the Meetings of the British Association 1887-1892 on the *Disappearance of Native*

Plants from their Local Habitats. In the *Journal of Botany*, 1925 (pages 273-5) W.M. Webb writing on "Plant Protection" refers also to the Editor of *The Gentleman's Magazine* who in 1885 urged the necessity to form societies for the protection of wild flowers etc.; this was followed by a letter describing the formation of just such a society, "The Selbourne Society". Is this paper of 1885 the earliest reference to the need for conservation of wild plants? We would be interested to hear of other early references known to members.

Congratulations to The Botanical Society of Japan and to the Deutsche Botanische Gesellschaft, both celebrating a Centenary in 1982. Prof. Brennan, BSBI President sent a letter of congratulation and goodwill to these Societies on behalf of BSBI.

Mary Briggs

ARUM NOTE (A rum note?)

On 3rd May this year a Jay was seen low in a hedgerow in White Cottage garden. Thinking that a nest or fledgling bird was under attack counter action was taken, only to find that the 'prey' was a plant of *Arum maculatum*. The Jay had snapped off the still-furled spathe and picked out the spadix from its centre, dropping the discarded spathe, 10.75 cm in length, as it flew off at our approach.

Through the years we have seen many plants of *Arum maculatum* in nearby woods with the spathe similarly broken off just above the 'bulge', but had not thought of Jays as being the culprits. If the Jay was taking the spadix to feed to its young, at that stage just before the unfurling of the spathe the cells of the spadix are "packed with starch grains", as the late Cecil Prime describes in the chapter 'Pollination and Seed Germination' (pages 166-180) of his book *Lords and Ladies*. (See Book Notes *BSBI News* 30 (p. 31).

Mary Briggs

KEY TO CRITICAL BOTANISTS – 2

The 'Davidmacaceae'

(See Key to 'Wellsiaceae' *BSBI News* 27 p. 26)

Similar in general appearance, but distinct in geographical distribution.

Tall, with conspicuous snow-white pappus; Past-President BSBI, Recorder for Channel Islands (other than Jersey); particular association with Heathers, Bamboos and Exotic Plants; 1

Tall, with dark pappus; current Secretary, BSBI Records Committee, Recorder for VC78; 2

1. Originally native to Ireland (earliest record 1590); in past 40 years found frequently in a Kentish garden;
abbreviation D. McC. David McClintock.
2. Of Scottish origins (six generations recorded); when native most often found on remote hills of Peebleshire; at present adventive in London;
abbreviation D.J. McC. David McCosh

N.B. D. McC has asked us to point out that the spelling is also critical, as he is McClintock from Ireland – but if he were McLintock he would be from Scotland.

M.B.

CONSERVATION

Possibly our elephant on p. viii *BSBI News* 31 should not have *picked* the plant for examination – unless, that is, it happened to be part of its staple diet, or, it was a plant locally common and plentiful and a close look required for identification? Recently, attention was drawn to the field advice that all plants should be looked at with a hand lens for identification but that no plants should be picked. Where there is a good-sized population it is possible that the picking of a single specimen could do less damage than the flattening of vegetation caused by lowering lens and eye to a prostrate or low growing plant in situ? The picture has been re-drawn for us by the artist, Charles Coleman.



Never forget! Look where you tread, mind where you sit.

This Plant's-eye view of a heavy tread is reproduced by permission of the Nature Conservancy Council from the recently published *Wildlife The Law and You*. A copy of this booklet is available free on receipt of a stamped addressed 9" x 6" envelope marked 'Wildlife and law' from BSBI, Oundle Lodge, Peterborough, PE8 5TN. **M.B.**

Important

A RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE IN BRITAIN FOR NOTIFICATION OF A RARE PLANT DISCOVERY BY A BSBI MEMBER

The Nature Conservancy Council has the legal responsibility for rare plants in Britain, but would very much appreciate the help of BSBI members and Recorders in the protection of these plants, (i.e. those with 15 or fewer 10 km² records in Britain or as listed in *BSBI News* 31 (i) – (viii)).

The safeguarding of a rare plant depends on maintaining its habitat. This primarily requires the co-operation of the landowner and tenant of the piece of ground on which it occurs, but it is also necessary that the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) is notified so that the site may be safeguarded from planning developments and other land use changes. How to secure a particular landowner/tenant's co-operation is a matter best left to the judgement of someone with local knowledge, which would normally be the BSBI Vice-County Recorder if residing in the area or the Assistant Regional Officer (ARO) of NCC.

The recommended procedure for notification of a rare plant is as follows:

1. *Notify the BSBI Recorder* who will ensure that a rare species population form is completed, and who will also notify the NCC ARO.

The NCC ARO will then be responsible for 2 and 3, in conjunction with the BSBI Recorder and the finder.

2. *Notify the Owner and the Agricultural Tenant.* This should preferably be by personal visit by those mentioned in 1. Record visit on rare species form (and amend population details if necessary).

3. *Notify the Chief Scientist's Team Member for Rare Plants, NCC, Huntingdon* (at present, Lynne Farrell).

Where appropriate the Recorder/ARO should:

4. *Notify the Secretary/Conservation Officer* of the local Trust for Nature Conservation (or equivalent body where there is no Trust for N.C.).

Where there is imminent threat, the Recorder should also:

5. *Notify the BSBI Conservation Committee Secretary* (at present, Duncan Donald, c/o RHS Garden, Wisley, WOKING, Surrey GU23 6QB).

NCC will notify current workers on the species.

Findings of rarities should be published by BSBI in *Watsonia* (in 'Plant Records' or as a paper), but this or any other reference should **not** give enough details of the locality to cause a threat to the plant's security.

R.A.H. Smith (NCC Observer on BSBI Council)

D.J. McCosh (Hon. Sec. BSBI Records Committee)

October 1982

Approved by Council 19.X.82.

CHANGES IN RECORDERS

It is with regret that we report the death of Miss M.E. Campbell on 11th August, 1982 (just as *BSBI News* was going to press). Maybud Campbell was deeply involved with BSBI for many years, a past Hon. General Secretary and she had long associations with VC 110, Outer Hebrides. An obituary will be published in *Watsonia*. So VC 110 is now temporarily without a Recorder.

We have also to report the resignation of two Recorders, Dr J.G. Dony and Mr E.L. Swann from three VCs, with regret but with our appreciation of and sincere gratitude for their very great contributions to the BSBI recording schemes and projects for local Floras over very many years. Both John Dony and Eric Swann tell us that they plan to continue with field work.

New Recorders have been appointed for:

- VC 20 HERTS B.R. Sawford, T.J.James, North Hertfordshire Museum Service,
The Old Fire Station, Baldock, Herts SG7 6AR.
- VC 28 W NORFOLK Dr C.P. Petch, The Manor House, Wolferton, King's Lynn,
Norfolk, PE31 6HA.
- VC 30 BEDS C.R. Boon, 7 Duck End Lane, Maulden, Bedford, MK45 2DL.
- VC 87 W PERTH ("vacant" in 1982 List of County Recorders) N. Stewart,
14 Church Hill, Edinburgh, EH10 4BQ.
- VCS 53 & 54 S. & N. Lincs in addition to Miss E.J. Gibbons:
Mrs. I. Weston, Lindris, Riseholme Lane, Riseholme, Lincoln
LN2 2LO.

Please note the following new addresses for Recorders:

- VC 8 S WILTS Miss A.M. Hutchison, 13 Sadler's Mead, Wilton, Salisbury,
Wiltshire, SP2 0DE.
- VC 93 N ABERDEEN Dr D. Welch, I.T.E. Banchory Research Station, Hill of Brathens,
Glassel, Banchory, Kincardineshire, AB3 4BY.

A POCKET MICROSCOPE

When I was demonstrating a hawkweed specimen at a meeting recently, the audience showed considerable interest in the pocket microscope I was using. This, a present from my wife, was made in Hong Kong and sold by Tasco Sales Inc. of 26th Street, Miami, Florida, price unknown. The instrument consists of two parallel closed cylinders – one of which houses 2 x 1.5 volt batteries, the other the optical system – mounted on a clear perspex base which houses a light bulb and a retractable blue-tinted condenser lens. Magnification is 30 diameters and the equipment is contained in a 141 x 48 x 22 mm vinyl case.

I can easily detect the very small glandular hairs of *Euphrasia occidentalis*, and I am surprised that this useful aid is not more widely available. I have seen it occasionally advertised in small ads in a few periodicals. Have other readers any experience in its use?

RODNEY BURTON, Sparepenny Cottage, Sparepenny Lane, EYNSFORD, Kent
DA4 0JJ.

JOHN GILBERT BAKER

The portrait of J.G. Baker painted by J.W. Forster, of which this is the cartoon, was left to the BSBI by his son E.G. Baker. For many years it hung in the hall under the stairway at the Linnean Society, but being an unconditional bequest, the BSBI Council decided this year that it would be appropriate to return the painting to Kew. Purchased from us for the Kew Herbarium by the Bentham-Moxey Trust the painting now hangs in the Old Central Library at the Herbarium, where it is seen to advantage and the Kew botanists feel that J.G. Baker has "come home".

After his appointment as First Assistant by Dr (later Sir Joseph) Hooker, Baker worked at Kew for almost 33 years, 9 of these as Keeper of the Herbarium and Library. His obituary in the Kew Guild Journal describes John Baker's knowledge of plants of all kinds as being "astonishing", and that in addition to his wide horticultural knowledge, "he knew British plants as few others knew them". His bibliography lists more than 400 published papers; also the important *Flora of Mauritius and the Seychelles* (1877) and, nearer home, *The Flora of North Yorkshire* (1863, ed. 2. 1906) and the *Flora of the English Lake District* (1885). Besides this he was a recognised authority on the petaloid monocotyledons.

D.E. Allen, BSBI Hon. Historian, sends the following note on J.G. Baker:

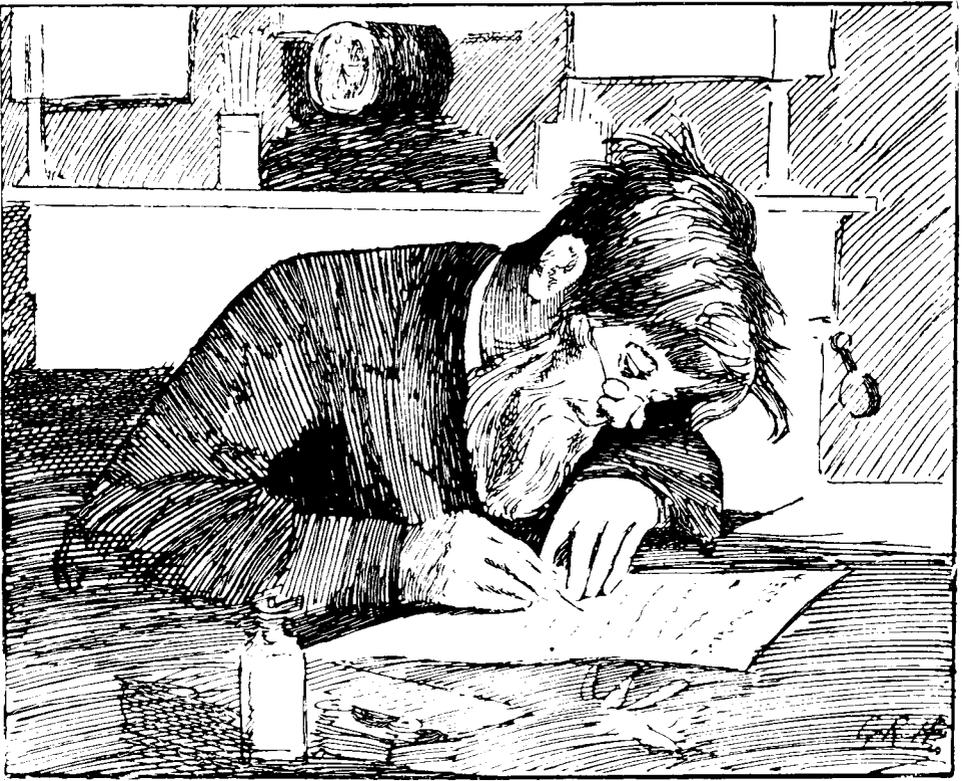
John Gilbert Baker (1834 – 1920) deserves our special veneration, for he was, strictly speaking, the founder of the Society. For it was he who was responsible, single-handed, for rescuing from the ruins of the ill-fated Botanical Society of London in 1857 its long standing service of organising the annual exchange by post of new or otherwise interesting, authoritatively-named specimens of British plants. He was twenty-three at the time and employed in his family firm of wholesale grocers and drapers in the small North Yorkshire market town of Thirsk. Remote from the national herbaria, he and many others like him had come to depend on corporately-sponsored exchanges for expanding their personal reference collections and for keeping up with the advances in knowledge. Though necessarily a local worker, his reputation was already national and he had even been invited – unsuccessfully – to take over the editorship of the *Phytologist*, the country's then leading botanical journal. So, despite his comparative youth, he carried sufficient weight in the botanical community to be reasonably sure of adequate support in his initiative.

This consisted of persuading the Thirsk Natural History Society, of which he was the President, to create a new class of non-resident members and take on the role of adoptive parent of the specimen exchanges. The resulting "Thirsk Botanical Exchange Club", a curious society within a society, quickly attracted a countrywide following and operated usefully for the next seven years.

Then in May, 1864, Baker was overwhelmed by a sudden, terrible disaster; a fire broke out and totally destroyed both his home and his business. Taking pity on him, Sir William Hooker invited him to Kew to work as his assistant, and as a result Baker moved to live in the South. Luckily, he was able to continue to run the Club, which thereupon became London-based.

He was to run it in the end for twenty-two years, passing on the baton eventually to the equally long-serving and public-spirited Charles Bailey. Though his work at Kew took Baker away from British botany more or less completely, he was to retain a special affection for the "B.E.C." till the very end of his unusually long life.

D.E. Allen



“John Gilbert Baker at work on one of his herbarium sheets”

REQUESTS

ATYPICAL BEE ORCHIDS IN BRITAIN

I am currently monitoring some interesting Suffolk populations of the Bee Orchid, *Ophrys apifera*, that consist almost entirely of plants lacking pigmentation in the flowers. Their sepals are pure white instead of the usual shades of pink, and the pale yellow-green lip bears only the faintest trace of markings. I would be grateful for information on the occurrence of apigmentose plants of this species elsewhere in the British Isles including details of the location, habitat, frequency of such variants and, if possible, their persistence from year to year at a given site.

The so-called 'Wasp Orchid', var. *trollii*, is the most striking variant of the Bee Orchid known to occur in Britain. This has an unrecurved lip that tapers to a point and bears random brown and yellow markings. This plant was thought to be restricted to the Cotswolds, but recent records of similar individuals from Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire suggest that it may be more widespread than previously assumed. I would appreciate any information on apparent 'Wasp Orchids' in other parts of Britain; in this case photographs would be especially welcome. The latter will be returned if requested and postage costs reimbursed.

Dr IAN DENHOLM, Rothamsted Experimental Station, HARPENDEN, Herts AL5 2JQ.

AZOLLA FILICULOIDES

In conjunction with one of my Final Year Students I am carrying out a study of *Azolla filiculoides*. This "fern" is proving to be annoyingly elusive and I should be glad to hear of any recent sites for it. Details of the location, including grid reference, associated flora and other characteristics of the site (nature of water body, depth, degree of shading, flow etc. .)? This information would be very useful to a current study on aspects of the autecology of this species.

DR P.M. WADE, & MISS J.C. ROSTRON, Department of Human Sciences, University of Technology, LOUGHBOROUGH, Leics, LE11 3TU.

DODDER and BROOMRAPE

In the *BSBI News* No. 28 (Sept. 1981) I requested information on current records for *Orobanche ramosa* and *Cuscuta epilinum*. Readers may be interested to know that I received no response to this request.

It would appear that in order to maintain their status as casuals in the British Flora, these parasites depend on being introduced as seed impurities when their particular host species is cultivated. Records for these species have become scarce with the decline in the cultivation of *Cannabis sativa* (Herp.) and *Linum usitatissimum* (Flax). The most recent record held by the Biological Records Centre for *O. ramosa* and *C. epilinum* is 1916 and 1968 respectively. Can anyone improve on these dates ?

In addition, can anyone supply records for the following dodder species: *Cuscuta suaveolens*, *C. gronovii* and *C. approximata* ?

MICHAEL JONES, 6 Lambs Lane, BUCKLEY, Clwyd, N. Wales.

SENECIO CAMBRENSIS – request for information

A group of research workers at St. Andrew's University, is currently studying *Senecio cambrensis* Rosser. The purpose of this note is a general request for any information on the plant (particularly its localities) that anyone may possess and to ask readers to look out for it in the coming season. The statement in the latest edition of C.T.W. that it is known from a single roadside in Flintshire is no longer true and it should be looked for wherever there are mixed populations of *S. squalidus* and *S. vulgaris* (particularly the rayed form of the latter).

S. cambrensis was described from a roadside site near Ffrith, near Wrexham, VC 51 in 1955 – this has remained the classic site. This summer (1982), however, the plant has been found in over 35 sites in the vicinity of Ffrith, the furthest being 11 km away. The most favoured habitat in this region is thin, dry soil at the edges of roads, often at the base of walls. Occasionally it is found on recently disturbed open sites. Because of its affinity with roads, it could easily have spread beyond this area – so please look out for it anywhere in North Wales.

The discovery of this species in Leith, Edinburgh during September 1982 was the first indication that a more widespread search would be necessary. Leith is one of the few areas where the hybrid between *S. squalidus* and *S. vulgaris* (*S. × baxteri*) occurs with any frequency, and as *S. cambrensis* is a fertile polyploid derivative of this hybrid, its discovery was not altogether surprising. Here it occurs on disturbed waste ground such as demolition sites.

As *S. cambrensis* is not always easy to recognise, some of its diagnostic characters will be mentioned. The plant is robust and tall (up to 50 cm) and as it ages the basal, lateral shoots develop to give the mature plant a shrubby appearance, with the base of the stem becoming woody. The leaves are intermediate in shape between *squalidus* and *vulgaris*, tending towards the latter, but more obovate and with a characteristic jagged outline. The young leaves are tomentose – which is particularly noticeable when the first flower buds are in a tight cluster at the stem apex. The capitula are broadly cylindrical (c. 10 × 6 mm) in bud and there are four distinct forms of flower as regards length of ligule. Eligulate: Short (ligules 2-3 mm); Medium (4-7 mm) being the commonest and Long (7-10 mm). The cypselae ('seeds') are larger than those of either parent, being 3-3.5 mm long and the pollen is mostly four-pored. The plant is fertile, usually setting at least 50% good seed, in contrast to *S. × baxteri* which is highly sterile.

The species may be looked for wherever the parents occur together. Particularly likely places are around Cardiff and Cork.

Due to problems of identification, the writer would like to see any suspicious specimens; postage will be refunded. Any information supplied will be fully acknowledged, if used.

H.J. NOLTIE, Department of Botany, The University, ST. ANDREW'S, Fife, KY16 9AL.

PERENNIAL BROME GRASSES

Seeds or other living material of perennial species of *Bromus* wanted; *B. benekenii* and *B. erectus* particularly welcome but any material would find a use.

DR P.M. SMITH, Botany Dep't, University of Edinburgh, Mayfield Road, EDINBURGH EH9 3JH.

TUSSAC GRASS

I am trying to trace the history and success of the various introductions into Britain of the Tussac Grass (*Poa flabellata*). The species is a very large tussock-forming grass reaching up to 2m and found as a native species in the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, Gough Island and Tierra del Fuego. The introductions to this country all seem to have come from the Falkland Islands and began in 1845 with the distribution of a parcel of seed sent from the Falklands by Gov. Moody. This seed was sent to Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles. It appears that some was also tried on the mainland of Scotland. A second period of introduction was around the end of the 19th Century, when seed was sent to the Congested Districts Board for Scotland for distribution to crofters living close to the sea.

The grass can be seen growing in crofters' hen runs on Shetland in the Dunrossness area. Some of the tussocks are supposed to have been there over 100 years and may be part of the original introduction.

Any information would be most welcome.

Dr D.W.H. WALTON, British Antarctic Survey, Madingley Road, CAMBRIDGE CB2 0ET.

WHITE- AND YELLOW-FLOWERED DACTYLORCHIDS

I am anxious to obtain information on the frequency of occurrence in the British Isles of Marsh- and Spotted-orchids with no pink, red or purple pigmentation on their flowers, bracts, stems and leaves. Care is needed when identifying such plants as some flowers have very faint lip markings and pink pollinia that are only discernible on close examination. The vigorous pale yellow form of the Early Marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *ochroleuca*) is not usually regarded as an albino form and is separated from albinos of other subspecies of *D. incarnata* primarily by its deeply three-lobed lip. This appears to have become very rare in Britain, and any records of this declining taxon would be especially welcome. The locality, habitat, grid reference, type and number of white- or yellow-flowered plants and details of any other dactyl-orchids present would be appreciated and postage costs gladly refunded.

RICHARD BATEMAN, Rothamsted Experimental Station, HARPENDEN, Herts AL5 2JQ

NOTICES

BSBI (official) Notices

PLANTS IN FOLKLORE

The joint BSBI/Folklore Society Conference with the above title will be held at the University of Sussex, Falmer, near Brighton on Friday to Monday, 8th – 10th April 1983.

A copy of the programme and other details, with a booking form, are enclosed with this mailing. Approximate cost is £45.00 and those intending to take part are reminded that in order to comply with the University's regulations, bookings should be made before 31st January, 1983.

BSBI COMMITTEE FOR SCOTLAND

Scottish Recorders' Conference 1983

A Recorders' Conference, combined with Field Meetings, will be held at Kindrogan on 4th – 5th June 1983. While preference will be given to Scottish Recorders, places may be available to other members. The cost will be £13.50 per day. For further details and bookings apply to:-

DR P. MACPHERSON, Honorary Secretary, 15 Lubnaig Road, GLASGOW G43 2RY.

BSBI BADGES FOR LADIES

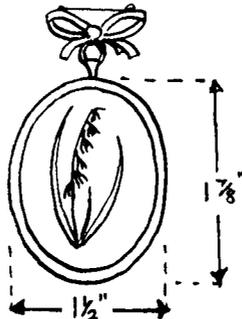
Following the production of a tie with the BSBI emblem (available from the Society's Agents, F. & M. Perring at Oundle Lodge), thought has been given to those members who do not normally wear ties.

We now have available BSBI emblems, on navy-blue fabric, made up into either pendants or brooches, in gilt or silver-plated frames. Twenty-seven inch chains in gilt or silver-plate are supplied with the pendants; the brooches in gilt or silver-plate are suspended from a small pin in the form of a bow.

The costs are:	gilt	silver-plated
Pendant and chain	£2.75	£3.75
Fob brooch	£2.75	£3.75

Postage and packing 50p extra. Badges are supplied in a presentation box.

Please order, enclosing Cheque made payable to the BSBI, from: MRS M.J. CANNON, 26 Purley Bury Avenue, PURLEY, Surrey CR2 1JD.



BSBI RECORDERS MEETING 1983

The next meeting in the biennial series of meetings for VC Recorders will be held in the Norwich area, *September 9th – 11th 1983*. The programme will include 1) a comparison of the very different experiences of Recorders in different areas of the British Isles; 2) records for the forthcoming 'Flora of Great Britain and Ireland'; 3) papers on the identification of some difficult plant groups (we hope to include *Potamogetonaceae* and *Gramineae*) linked with field excursions; 4) a generous allowance of discussion time for those involved in local recording for exchange of ideas.

All VC Recorders will receive an invitation, full Programme and booking details, and will be given priority for accommodation. Other BSBI members are also welcome to attend as facilities permit.

Members who are **not** VC Recorders but who would like to receive programme and further information, please send 9" x 6" s.a.e. marked "Recorder Meeting" to: Mr D.A. Wells, P.O. Box 6, Huntingdon PE18 6BU. The programme will then be sent when available – anticipated April/May.

Joanna Martin

Other (non-BSBI) Notices

BIOLOGY OF PTERIDOPHYTES

An International Symposium, sponsored by the
British Pteridological Society, the Linnean Society of London, and
the Royal Society of Edinburgh

will be held at

The UNIVERSITY BOTANY DEPT and ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN
EDINBURGH

SEPTEMBER 12th – 16th 1983

For further information (a circular will be issued in Autumn 1982) apply
to the Executive Secretary, Royal Society of Edinburgh
22-24 George Street, EDINBURGH EH2 2PQ.

CHANGE AT FLATFORD MILL

Members who have enjoyed a stay at Flatford Mill Field Centre and delighted in the incomparable scenes and buildings of John Constable's Stour Valley, will be sorry to know that after 33 years, Jim Bingley the warden is relinquishing the post and retiring to Yorkshire. He is succeeded by Dr Andrew Hodges, a lecturer at York University, and latterly a teacher at a large comprehensive school in the same city.

Sussex Plant Atlas (1980)

A Corrigenda sheet for this has been published by Borough of Brighton, Booth Museum of Natural History. Members who purchased this Atlas may obtain a copy of the Corrigenda by calling at the Museum, or by post, sending a 9" x 6" s.a.e. marked 'Plant Atlas Corrigenda' to: MR C.A.B. STEEL, Principal Keeper Natural Sciences Museum of Nat. Hist., Dyke Road, BRIGHTON, East Sussex.

GROWING WILD FLOWERS FROM SEED

Members wishing to grow wild flowers in their gardens may find useful the following list of recommended seedsmen, included on the current BSBI/NCC information sheet on this subject. As you will see (below) the seeds offered originate from *native British sources*, and these seedsmen have also agreed to co-operate by NOT including seed of Red Data Book plants in general seed mixes. These, however, may be available separately for garden use.

Specialist seedsmen selling wild flower seed originating from native British sources, i.e. either collected directly from the wild or harvested from plants grown from such seed.

(The range of species offered is wide, but at present large quantities of seed may not be available).

Emorsgate Seeds,
Middle Cottage,
Emorsgate,
Terrington St. Clement,
King's Lynn, Norfolk.

Helen McEwen,
The Seed Exchange,
44 Albion Road,
Sutton, Surrey.
(Please send stamped addressed envelope
for catalogue).

John Chambers,
15 Westleigh Road,
Barton Seagrave,
Kettering, Northants NN15 5AJ.

Suffolk Herbs,
Sawyers Farm
Little Cornard,
Sudbury, Suffolk.

Naturescape,
Little Orchard,
Whetton in the Vale,
Notts,
NG13 9EP.

Mr Fothergill's Seeds,
Regal Lodge,
Gazeley Road,
Kentford, Newmarket,
Suffolk CB8 7QB.

W.W. Johnson & Son Ltd.,
Boston, Lincs PE21 8AD.

BSBI MEMBERS LEADING BOTANICAL EXCURSIONS ABROAD IN 1983

Cyprus	09 March	Mary Briggs	2 Weeks
Crete	31 March	Mary Briggs	2 Weeks
Corsica	22 April	Mary Briggs	12 Days
Portugal (Central)	09 May	Mary Briggs	2 Weeks
Spain (Pyreneese)	16 May	John Mason	2 Weeks
Switzerland (Wengen)	21 June	Mary Briggs	2 Weeks
France (Alpes Maritimes)	25 June	Dr F. Perring	8 Days
Spain (Pyreneese)	11 July	Dr J. Richards	2 Weeks
Azores	07 July	Eric Clement	2 Weeks
Kashmir	12 July	Mary Briggs	2 Weeks
Austria (Tyrol)	15 July	John Mason	2 Weeks
Switzerland (Davos)	18 Aug	Mary Briggs	8 Days

Further details of the above can be obtained from:

Cox & Kings Travel, 46 Marshall Street, LONDON W1V 2PA. Tel: 01-734 8291.

Crete 17-31 March Dr H.J.M. Bowen. apply to:

Peregrine Holidays – Town & Gown Travel, 40/41 South Parade, Summertown, Oxford OX2 7JP.

ALIENS and ADVENTIVES

FALKLAND ISLANDS DAISIES

Dr Walton's request for information on Tussac (or Tussock) Grass introduced from the Falkland Islands reminds me that on the CSSF meeting in Caithness in 1972 we were very interested to see *Senecio smithii* well-established. Native to Patagonia and Chile, this was introduced by the local men who sailed to Southern waters in whaling ships. Possibly the large white 'daisy' flowers were reminiscent of the Ox-eye daisy from home – familiar in an alien landscape? Many of the colonies seen in Caithness, known locally as 'Falkland Islands daisies', were associated with old crofts.

The accompanying drawing by Pam Haddon shows *Senecio smithii* growing in the abandoned garden of the ruined croft of a Mr Bruce who died in the early 1930's and who had planted the 'daisies'. Mrs Helen Bruce (nee Banks) had been the niece of a mariner Banks who had brought the *S. smithii* from Tierra del Fuego. David Smithers who sent me the information on the owners of the croft tells me that he himself visited Tierra del Fuego and found that people of Scots origin formed the larger part of the population there.

Mary Briggs

HUCKLEBERRY AND OTHER NIGHTSHADES AT DARTFORD

On 21.8.82 about 30 plants of *Solanum scabrum* Mill. (Garden Huckleberry) were discovered in fields on Dartford Marshes, W. Kent (VC. 16). E.J. Clement tells me he knows of no previous records. The fields had been treated with the usual processed manure commercially available as a by-product of sewage works.

From a distance the Garden Huckleberry looks like a sturdy *Solanum nigrum* with much larger flowers and fruits. At close quarters however, there are clear differences. The leaves are large, flat, entire and rather obovate with long winged stalks and the anthers are brown not yellow. Not least, the stout stems and branches are prominently and dentately winged.

A resurgence of interest in the possible culinary properties of this *Huckleberry* means that other sightings may well be made. It was later found to be fairly abundant on a rubbish tip at Stone, W. Kent on 12.9.82.

The type of manure used at Dartford Marshes produces of course enormous numbers of *Tomato* plants and also the *Black* (both subspecies) and *Woody Nightshades* in quantity, and occasionally *Henbane*, *Deadly Nightshade*, *Apple of Peru*, and *Datura*.

More interesting and rather difficult to explain, is the unvarying abundance in this material of the edible *Physalis peruviana* L. (Cape Gooseberry). I have also noticed the related *P. philadelphica* Lam. and occasionally *Solanum pseudocapsicum* L. (Jerusalem Cherry) and *S. capsicastrum* Link ex Schauer.

When the area was grazed by cattle, they eagerly ate the *Tomato* plants & *Huckleberry*, but *Black Nightshade* with more reluctance. Large plants of *Apple of Peru* were completely untouched.

Another member of this family, rare in Britain, *Solanum americanum* Miller, was observed in W. Kent as an oil milling adventive on waste ground at Erith on 20.8.82. It has smaller flowers, anthers and seeds than *S. nigrum*, with an erect inflorescence.

J.R. PALMER, 19 Water Mill Way, S. Darenth, DARTFORD, Kent DA4 9BB.



Senecio smithii DC., Dunnet Caithness, 1972

© by Pam Haddon (from a slide taken by David Smithers)

Although the accompanying "Adventive News" may be the last to appear above his signature, it is by no means the last we shall hear of, or from, Eric Clement. In a letter to the Editor he writes, "Here is my last *major* contribution for *BSBI News*. Henceforth I expect to write much less though I doubt if I will stop!" Not every BSBI member is a spontaneous alien enthusiast but Eric's intriguing abbreviation-packed prose must have attracted many to this field of study. His most commendable brevity, accuracy and punctuality – not to mention his neatly typed MS – make him an Editor's ideal contributor.

Our sincere thanks go to him for his unflagging efforts over the years and we wish him every success with his *magnum opus*. We shall miss his regular articles, but look forward to his less regular ones. In the meantime we welcome Adrian Grenfell who has promised continuity of the series.

(And, by the way, will some more plant illustrators come forward, please?)

Ed.

MIXED BAG

Acacia falciformis DC.: Many seedlings, in woods on Tresco (Scilly), May 1971. J.R. Palmer. ?1st Br record. Also found were many seedlings of *A. melanoxylon* R. Br., some growing on fallen tree trunks and yet still being able to reach 6 feet in height. *Fl. Eur.* 2:85 credits Br with this latter sp., and also *A. retinodes* Schlecht., as "locally naturalized", but no records are yet on my files! Help, please. Mrs C.C. Harvey, who lives on St. Mary's, remarks that "*A. melanoxylon* may well seed itself in the 'wattle' woodland on Tresco, but I have not seen seedlings elsewhere. A much more likely alien to establish itself here is *Albizia lophantha*, under established plants of which annual crops of seedlings occur abundantly." No-one else reports this sp.

Cardaminopsis arenosa (L.) Hayek: Lydiates Hill, nr Baggeridge Brickworks (Staffs), Apr-May 1982. C. Westall, comm. B.R. Fowler. **BM**. Det. EJC. Two colonies, totalling c. 35 plants, on former colliery spoil heaps now being landscaped and replanted with trees and grass. No other noteworthy aliens were present.

This is a species, so very common as an adventive, or weed, in N.W. Europe (e.g. very many records in *Gorteria*), that should find a foothold in Br. It was certainly on piles of iron-ore earth, imported chiefly from Scandinavia, at Bromley-by-Bow gas-works (S. Essex) from 1956 till 1970 (Hb. EJC) and later. But it was lost, together with *Berteroa incana*, when the last pile was removed. This is a variable sp., with large petals that are white (as in Staffs and S. Essex) or pinkish; it is illustrated in Fitter, Fitter & Blamey (1974).

Cerastium dichotomum L.: Bank of new road cutting, Bryn-crug, Towyn (Merioneth), July 1972. P.M. Benoit, Dr J.G. & C.M. Dony. Conf. Dr A. Melderis. I know of no other recent records for this sp., except in Ge and Ho.

Conyza bonariensis (L.) Cronq.: Bridle path, Smallford, nr St. Albans (Herts), May 1981. P. Brown. **BM**. Det. J.B. Marshall.

Coronilla glauca L.: S. end of parade, Eastbourne (E. Sussex), 1980-81. K.E. Bull. Planted shrubs have produced hundreds of seedlings all over the place, and it is now "completely naturalised."

Cotoneaster bullatus Bois (*not* Boiss.): Well established at Crackley Woods, and along the disused railway line, nr Kenilworth (Warwicks), June 1980. Mrs B.M. Startin, comm. Mrs P. Copson. Det. EJC. Conf. P.G. Barnes, of RHS Wisley. Since the ?1st Br record given in the preface of DMcC's *Supplement* (1957), p. vi, on Freshfield dunes (S. Lancs), records have accumulated from many parts of Br. A.G. Kenneth reports its presence on stony roadsides and in basic ravines in Kintyre, and its seeding into natural or semi-natural habitats in the Argyll area. J. Harron has seen it established or naturalized in Co's Down, Antrim and Louth, in glens and by rivers and streams. In England it seems to be much more restricted to waste places or wall-tops – e.g. on old railway track, Oswestry (Salop), 1979, or school wall, Much Wenlock (Salop), 1978, seen by Miss B. Davies and K.E. Bull, resp.

The only known record for Wales is as a casual in a garden, Cyncoed, Cardiff (Glam.), July 1980, coll. Col. M. Salmon, comm. R.G. Ellis, **NMW**, det. EJC.

This sp. has been much confused with other species. It is a large leaved (1½-3½ in. long, and puckered above), deciduous shrub, with upright (not spreading) pinkish petals, and with (4-)5 nutslets in the red fruits arranged in corymbs of 10-30. Bailey (1949) is incorrect in various details – use W.J. Bean (1970) for greater reliability!

Cotoneaster lacteus W.W. Sm.: One young sapling (c. 5 ft) in scrub on SE facing bank of Leatherhead by-pass, Leatherhead (Surrey), Dec 1980. Dr A.C. Leslie & K.W. Page. This species is just beginning to break out of gardens? – e.g. J.R. Palmer had the first two records for W. Kent last year, as follows:

- a) One large, bird-sown plant high on unplanted, road embankment, Detling, July 1981. Conf. EJC.
- b) Seedlings, some sizeable, in and around a car-park, near Bromley Hospital, Nov 1981.

Cotoneaster multiflorus Bunge: Bison Hill, Whipnade (Beds), June & Oct 1981. Dr J.G. & C.M. Dony. Hb. EJC. 1 shrub, c. 12 ft high, but producing only one flowering branch. 1st Br record. See Bean (1970) for a good description. Noteworthy are its large height, white and patent petals, leaves with long petioles (¼-½ in.) and lvs becoming ± glabrous (densely woolly beneath, when young).

Davallia cf. *mariesii* T. Moore: Two clumps on wall of view point at Claremont, Esher (Surrey), Sept 1973. Mrs L.M.P. Small. RNG. Det. J.A. Crabbe. Part of the *D. bullata* complex (*Davalliaceae*), with its confusion of names.

Hydrangea sargentiana Rehd.: Well naturalized in extensive grounds, Valencia Island (S. Kerry), 1966. Dr H.J.M. Bowen. "Tree ferns are also natzd here." (See *BSBI News* 28, p. 15).

Hypericum olympicum L.: Old tip, Aristotle Lane, Oxford (Oxon), Sept 1981. Dr H.J.M. Bowen. RNG. Dr N.K.B. Robson wrote up this sp. and its allies in *Plantsman* 1(4):192-200 (1980).

Inula viscosa (L.) Aiton: Roadside waste ground, Landguard, Felixstowe (E. Suffolk), Aug-Sept 1982. G.W. Maybury. Det. EJC. Introduction via the constant stream of lorries from Felixstowe Docks seems most likely for this great rarity in Br, although it is so typical of the Medit. area. Cf. *BSBI News* 21, p. 16. Mrs E.M. Hyde reports that the solitary plant was in full flower, with a height of 3 ft and similar spread, and was presumably several years old, although no seedlings could be found. Nor were there any noteworthy associated plants. It must be the 1st NCR to add to *Simpson's Flora of Suffolk* (1982), and to be re-named as *Dittrichia viscosa* (L.) W. Greuter, if we follow *Fl. Eur.* 4. I have yet to trace the sources of "naturalized in a few localities" given in *CTW*: 833 – I presume they are long since gone. Ditto for *I. graveolens*.

Lychnis chalconica L.: Rubbish-dump, Guiseley (M.W. Yorks), 1978. Mrs F. Houseman. Very rarely occurs outside gardens.

Passiflora caerulea L.: Whiteknights Park, Reading (Berks), Nov 1981. Dr H.J.M. Bowen. RNG. Growing on shingle, and certainly not planted, with *Galinsoga*, etc. Trailing plant, without fls. Close by, on waste ground, was *Solanum pseudocapsicum* L., also preserved in RNG. This latter sp. seems to have a predilection for London pavements and basements. Seedlings were spotted by J.R. Palmer, in Nov-Dec 1981, at Knightsbridge and in SW1 (both Mdx).

Phacelia tanacetifolia Benth.: Some 15 plants, in a field of lucerne, Bird Brow, nr Lewes (E. Sussex), July 1982. Mrs E. Thomas. Det. EJC. Cf. *BSBI News* 18, p. 13.

Physocarpus opulifolius (L.) Maxim.: Mature bush, 8 ft x 8 ft, in a willow scrub, far from a house, Gala Water (Midlothian), GR 36/430.496, July 1980. R.C.L. Howitt. Conf. EJC. Allied to the genus *Spiraea*, and differing in its bladdery follicles.

Ruscus hypoglossum L.: Small quarry, Craigmillar, Edinburgh, Apr 1975. Mrs O.M. Stewart. Probably planted, but over 50 years ago – see the voucher in E, dated Aug 1946!

Scilla messeniaca Boiss.: Edge of Smallcombe Wood, Bath (N. Somerset), Apr 1981. R.D. Randall. Det. DMcC, conf. Dr P. Yeo. First noticed c. 2 years ago, and "it seems capable of producing seed." Not seen in any local gardens. Endemic of S. Greece and perhaps Albania.

Scopolia carniolica Jacq.: Established for at least 5 years on overgrown waste ground, Wisley (Surrey), Apr 1982. Comm. Dr A.C. Leslie. K.E. Bull tells me that it is still persisting (March 1981) in the long-neglected Warley Place Gardens (S. Essex). Its "upright growth, with solitary, yellow, bell-like fls dangling down on longish stalks", as KEB put it, do not immediately suggest its family, *Solanaceae*.

Sedum mexicanum Britt. (*S. aureum* hort., non Wirtg. ex F.W. Schultz): Two large clumps, on waste ground, Granton, Edinburgh (Midlothian), July 1980. Mrs O.M. Stewart. 1st Br record.

Senecio doronicum L.: Balnaknoch, nr Mulben (Moray), July 1977. Mrs O.M. Stewart. Painting, only, seen by EJC, the voucher being mislaid (in ?E).

Sorbaria aitchisonii (Hemsl.) Rehd.: Outside abandoned garden, Burafoot (Kirkcud.), July 1977. Mrs O.M. Stewart & R.C.L. Howitt. Four, or more, spp escape in this confusing genus.

Sorbus hupehensis C.K. Schneider: One grew in hedgerow along bridleway, remote from any road

or house, Speedwell Farm, Woburn (Beds), Oct 1981. Dr J.G. & C.M. Dony and Mrs B.E.M. Garratt. But for its "lovely, white berries" it may have been overlooked.

Smyrniium perfoliatum L.: Cliff edge, Peacehaven (E. Sussex), May 1981. R. Lord, comm. R. Minor. One plant, only, seen. Cf. *BSBI News* 31, p. 16.

Spartina pectinata Link: Seaton Burn (S. Northumb.), 1981. Dr A.J. Richards. NCE. Comm. & det. J.M. Mullin. A rarely grown, ornamental grass preferring damp spots.

Symphoricarpus × *chenaultii* Rehder (*S. microphyllus* × *orbiculatus*): Several bushes at edge of rough meadow, Little Abington (Cambs), GR 52/532.492, Sept 1974 (as *S. microphyllus*). B. Jackson. CGE. Re-det. Dr A.C. Leslie, 1981. ACL points out that "it differs from *S. microphyllus* in its racemose inflorescence, not single or paired flowers and from *S. orbiculatus* in its white berries strongly stippled pink, not wholly coral red." M.A. Hyde, independently, proposed the same conclusion re his find of a large bush on waste ground by R. Gipping, Ipswich (E. Suffolk), Nov 1980. "The fruits were too large for *S. orbiculatus*", which it otherwise resembled. Doubtless, other records need re-determination.

Thalictrum delavayi Franch.: Waste ground, Fulbourn (Cambs), Sept 1978. G.M.S. Easy. Comm. C.D. Preston. Hb. GMSE. Conf. ACL. ?1st Br record. This plant is commonly cult. as *T. diptercarpum*, an allied sp. Both hail from W. China.

Thalictrum lucidum L.: Banks of Whiteadder river, Edrington Levels (Berwicks), July 1979. Mrs. O.M. Stewart. E, as *T. angustifolium* L. One plant, 5 ft tall, ¾ mile from habitation, with no other exotics about. Re-coll. Mr & Mrs B.M. Howitt, on BSBI Meeting, for Hb. EJC. This plant lies in a complex group of allied spp., but I believe my re-determination is now correct, after matching it up with European specimens in BM.

Thuja plicata D. Don: One self-sown, young plant in woodland, above Burford Bridge Hotel grounds, Box Hill, Dorking (Surrey), June 1980. Dr A.C. Leslie. The foliage is aromatic, fruity and pineapple-like, even without handling. *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* is easily confused with it, but the crushed lvs of this yield a resinous, parsley-like scent. Reports of ?planted trees have confused its status in Br, but Mrs O.M. Stewart has certainly found it well naturalized at Shambellie Wood, New Abbey (Kirkcud.), where a group planted in the 1920's has produced many seedlings, saplings and fairly full grown trees.

Also in Shambellie Wood, OMS found, in Apr 1979, abundant self seedlings of *Tsuga heterophylla*, at various ages of growth. Miss E.P. Beattie, who, sadly, has now retired completely from botany, found this species naturalising freely on Yester Estate, Gifford (E. Lothian). The best spot in S.E. England seems to be at Bedgebury (W. Kent), where seedlings occur in the forests roundabout (comm. J.R. Palmer). The earliest records of natural regeneration in Br, in 1959 and 1960, can be found in *Proc. BSBI* 4:40 (1060).

FUTURE ADVENTIVE NEWS

Henceforth,

A.L. Grenfell, 19 Station Road, Winterbourne Down, BRISTOL, BS17 1EP.

will be compiling *Adventive News*. All records and observations should be sent directly to him, most preferably on slips of paper of size 5 in. x 3 in. He eagerly awaits the flood . . .

Also, to spread the work load,

J.M. Mullin, Dept. Botany, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, LONDON, SW7 5BD.

has offered to identify, or confirm any alien plant specimens, and he will then pass on the records to ALG.

All alien records in my own files will be freely available to ALG, and *vice-versa*, so there will be no lack of awareness in our future writings. I send my thanks to all for listening to my 8-year long monologue, and especial thanks to those many Members (and non-Members!) who made positive contributions. Our knowledge of adventive plants has greatly grown over this span: please do not let it relapse now. Henceforth, my own energies will be directed into compiling, with Mrs M.C. Foster, a comprehensive

catalogue of our alien and adventive plants, wherein all information that we have gathered together will be summarised.

Good hunting in 1983.

ERIC J. CLEMENT, 13 Shelford, Burritt Road, KINGSTON-ON-THAMES, Surrey, KT1 3HR.

SWEET BROME (*Bromus carinatus*)

In Adventive News No. 20 (*BSBI News* No. 28) "Sweet Brome Grass in Britain" by Eric Clement, I was puzzled by his "wonder(ing) how this grass spreads naturally".

From its early days at Kew I had noted it along the well-walked towpath at Putney, on the footpath to Putney Lower Common and on the adjacent Barnes Common. My simple conclusion was that the seed was carried by walkers on their muddy shoes and perhaps shaggy canine coats. Eric Clement told me he had earlier considered and discarded this theory because the fruits would be too big and were not adhesive or adherent. He agreed, however, that the grass did follow footpaths and encouraged me to watch and pursue my idea.

I bore it in mind but with little hope of any hard evidence. One day, however, on my return from the above mentioned Commons, I found ripened pieces of spikelet of *Bromus carinatus* adhering to the knot of my shoelace (after a 45 minute journey by foot and public transport).

It now seems to me that the heavy non-adhering seed is carried inside the "husk" which is capable of some attachment – the lemma, awn and any piece of attached stalk being scabrid. While not as effective as hooked hairs or a burr, the scabridity would seem to give enough attachment for the fruit to be carried or brushed far enough away to establish a new station. The amount of seed needed to do this would presumably be quite small; the spikelets and fully developed flowers have brittle stalks and break off easily.

My interest does not derive from any admiration for its capacity to spread. Adventive News 20 mentions its frightening domination. I greatly fear that it will in time disturb the heathland part of Barnes Common though Eric Clement has tried to re-assure me that it will not invade closed turf; even so it is beginning to surround it.

Eric also asked me to mention an error he made in his penultimate paragraph – that the grass is known in the U.S.A. as California Brome (not Californian Brome). He pointed out that the illustration, so helpful otherwise, was of the plant at a young erect stage whereas it soon droops, assuming a very different appearance for the rest of the year. From my own observations I would add that it is also a much stouter looking plant than the illustration suggests.

Is my theory of scabridity acceptable? Can this vigorous grass initiate new stands with only a small number of seeds?

I, too, regret the change of name to Sweet Grass by Br botanists.

JOAN M. STODDART, 35 Linden Gardens, LONDON W2 4HH.

POKEWEEDS (*Phytolacca* spp.) IN BRITAIN

You've seen the picture (by J. McLean – BSBI News 31, p. 28), now read about it.

Alas, after several years of effort, and study of many specimens, I still cannot sort out, confidently, the various species that occur in Britain. Certainly, no wild material from Br seen by me has proved to be *P. americana* L., the only plant described in *CTW*:289 – I have seen correctly determined specimens only from the Azores, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain. It is a tall, bushy plant with inflorescences typically arching downwards, *Buddleia*-like, and often \pm pendulous in fruit. This N. American species, natzd in many warm parts of the world, is unequivocal; the problem lies in the more hardy, shorter and more popular garden species coming from E. Asia. There is a complexity of forms and names, possibly all best sunk under the name of *P. acinosa* Roxb. aggr., the earliest published epithet in the group.

This continental division is clearly shown by the two coloured photographs in *Reader's Digest Ency. Garden Plants and Flowers*, p. 525. The stiffly erect spike of flowers (upper photo) belongs to the *P. acinosa* group (mis-captioned as *P. americana*), whereas the fruits (lower photo) truly belong to *P. americana*. Note how true *P. americana* has longer and narrower (ovate-lanceolate) lvs than its Asian congeners, and has a shiny and pinkish appearance characterising its stems and lvs. K.A. Beckett suggests that the latter was photographed from a cut and wilting specimen, but I remain sceptical! The accompanying "habitat" sketch is, incidentally, most misleading: 'no species is multi-stemmed from the base like this.

I have never yet seen *P. americana* grown as a garden ornamental; nowadays it may well be almost restricted to botanic gardens. But the Asian complex is, in my experience, surprisingly frequently grown, at least in S.E. England. Birds are very fond of the succulent purple-black fruits, and soon disperse the seeds, typically to sites at the foot of walls or fences on which they perch! In Belgium and the Netherlands both "species" are claimed, *P. americana* being much the scarcer one; the Asian representative is most often called *P. esculenta* Van Houtte, as this is the only one described in some literature – e.g. *Fl. Eur.* 1:112. It is this "split", as best as I can determine, that is bird-sown on and around Kew Green (Surrey) and has been seen there for so many years. This is the form that Joan McLean so kindly drew for us and that appears, somewhat cryptically, in the last *BSBI News*, p. 28.

Far too many records of the *P. acinosa* aggr. have reached me to list herein. Most are close to gardens, but by no means all. Singletons are the norm, and no large colony has yet been found in the wild. Most remarkable, perhaps, was the July 1981 record by J.O.H. Fisher, comm. Mrs M. Briggs, of a single plant on heathland at the edge of saltings, at Itchenor (W. Sussex). Amongst pure, native vegetation it looked so very incongruous, bordered by *Phragmites* and overtopped by a dead *Ulex* bush, on which, undoubtedly, the bird responsible had duly sat and evacuated. Stomach enzymes are said, in the USA literature, to assist germination of the seeds that can otherwise be tardy. JOHF sent me two very beautiful coloured photos of the plant and habitat, but I cannot, unfortunately, count the number of stamens and carpels from these.

The latest monograph of *Phytolacca* still dates from 1909, written by H. Walter, and does not include all species now grown in Britain. The following key is based on this work, supplemented by snatches (perhaps not all accurate?) extracted from the gardening literature. It is provided, with some reluctance, as a preliminary guide, in order to encourage another Member to study this fascinating genus with more dedication than I could allow.

KEY TO SPECIES

- Fls sessile or pedicels less than 3 mm; less than 2 ft tall *P. octandra* L.
Fls with pedicels 4.5-10 mm; 3-10 ft tall
 Carpels, 10, united up to the styles; 4-10 ft tall
 *P. americana* L. (*P. decandra* L.)
Carpels, 7-9 (-10), free to their base; 3-5 ft tall; Ea Asian spp.
 Stamens 10-16; perianth uniformly light green
 *P. latberia* (Buch.—Ham.) H. Walt.
Stamens 12; perianth purple-rose, always
Stamens (7–)8(–9)
 Pedicels and infl axis almost glabrous; perianth normally
 white; anthers rose *P. esculenta* Van Houtte
 Pedicels and infl axis scabrid-glandular; perianth greenish
 white to pinkish; anthers white *P. acinosa* Roxb.

N.B. Many plants in late summer become entirely suffused with red-purple throughout; late flowers on these plants will be invariably purple and could thus tend to key out wrongly to *P. clavigera*. Seeing, unsuspectedly, the *same* plant with pure white fls in the spring and then dark purple fls in the autumn, I once erred and gave it two differing specific names! Always count the floral parts of several blooms, to avoid a non-typical sample.

All species on record for Br are keyed out above. *P. octandra* native of S. America, only occurs as a very rare wool alien (e.g. Hb. EJC); it is a sprawling, ugly weed, and not in cultivation. The remainder are in our gardens. The four Asian spp. are often very difficult to sort out, especially when pressed, when colours tend to be lost; treatment as varieties, or subspecies, may well be more appropriate. The two closest taxa are *P. esculenta* and *P. acinosa*; more than one recent author has sunk *P. esculenta* into the synonymy of *P. acinosa*, e.g. *Zander Handwörterbuch der Pflanzennamen*, 12th edn (1980), but not so in *Hortus Third* (1976). The whole spectrum of variation may be continuous in British horticulture, but disjunctive in their native range. More careful observation is needed.

I am greatly indebted to Mrs M.C. Foster who has grown for me most of the above spp. in her garden at Bexleyheath (W. Kent). The birds, at least, have enjoyed her plants. Their diet included *P. americana* (ex S. Spain, coll. Mrs B. Molesworth Allen), *P. octandra* (ex New Zealand, coll. MCF) and the *P. acinosa* aggr., any of which could now occur roundabouts!

E.J. CLEMENT, 13 Shelford, Burritt Road, KINGSTON-ON-THAMES, Surrey KT1 3HR.

Hibiscus trionum L. in Britain

This attractive garden annual, Flower-of-an-hour, is a regular casual in Br, distributed by many means, including bird-seed and wool. Alas, it is usually solitary and never persists in spite of frequently setting good seed: it has large, exotic-looking, pale yellow fls with blackish-purple centres, the petals much overlapping. Trevor Evans has kindly drawn one of his plants (see front cover) grown from seed collected from a singleton on Newport rubbish-tip (Mons) in 1978. Other recent occurrences include waste ground, Colchester (N. Essex), 1975, comm. M.J. Wigginton; Devizes (Wilts), Nov 1976, P. Horton; rubbish tips in Stone area (W. Kent), 1973, 1975 & 1977, J.R. Palmer; rubbish tip, Waterford (Herts), 1979, C.G. Hanson *et al.*

E.J. Clement

WHICH LATIN NAMES SHOULD WE USE ? *from the BSBI Nomenclature Referee*

As Dandy's 1958 *List of British Vascular Plants* is now very out of date, we are often asked by authors of county Floras and others what Latin names they should use for British plants. There are two main solutions. The first is to use the currently "correct" names; but this is difficult because in many cases the correctness of a name, especially where the taxonomy of the plant is complex, is very much a matter of opinion. It is also difficult because the information needed to make these decisions is often hard to find and even harder to evaluate. We can recommend this solution only to those who have the time and means to work it out, and who are confident that their Flora will be sufficient of a pace-setter for the inclusion of unfamiliar names in it to be ultimately more of a help than a hindrance.

The other solution is to follow some up-to-date published list. When the new *Flora of Great Britain and Ireland* appears, the names in it will provide a thorough revision of the nomenclature of our flora, and we can assume that they will be accepted as standard in the way that Dandy's were. This will not be for some years yet, however; meanwhile it would be unhelpful to try and update Dandy's list when, because of the work on the new Flora, both taxonomy and nomenclature are in a state of flux. The most acceptable current published set of names is undoubtedly that in Clapham, Tutin & Warburg, *Excursion Flora of the British Isles* ed. 3, 1981. These names in general follow *Flora Europaea*, but update it, and reject a few of its wilder novelties. The new B.R.C. recording cards are using these names, so we will have to become familiar with them anyway. Any set of names used for local or popular purposes should be a reasonable compromise between up-to-dateness and intelligibility, and should follow some standard and widely available publication. For these reasons we strongly recommend using the names in the *Excursion Flora* ed. 3, unless there is compelling reason to do otherwise.

A.O. CHATER, Botany Dep't, British Museum (Nat. Hist.), LONDON S.W. 7.

Something to do in Hamamet

This is a suggestion for anyone contemplating a package holiday in Hamamet, Tunisia, and not wanting to spend the whole time bronzing, eating and sleeping (worthy holiday occupations though these are). Close to Hamamet is the only locality for *Vulpia gracilis*, a good species in the *Vulpia membranacea* group, which is one of the only two species of *Vulpia* in the world (the other is South American) I have not grown and whose chromosomes I have not examined. Living material (seeds) would be very helpful in my research, and if anyone would like an extra interest of this type during a trip to Hamamet I should be very pleased to provide details of the locality, including a complete list of associated species, which include the interesting conifer *Tetraclinis articulata*, restricted in Europe to Malta and one spot in S.E. Spain.

C.A. STACE, Dep't of Botany, The University, LEICESTER LE1 7RH.

Field meeting, Valle Anzasca, Regione Piemonte

Although we are the Botanical Society of the British Isles we have keen members in a number of overseas countries. One of these has taken the trouble to send us (in Italian) an account of a field meeting.

The following is, we hope, an acceptable rendering.

This excursion had as its objective to study the state of the flora in the Anzasca valley, and particularly that belonging to the village of Calasca Castiglione some 19,000 feet above sea level, which in 1978 suffered a violent avalanche and flood.

In that year the river had destroyed the sides of the mountains, exposing the bare rock to the full force of the sun.

Nevertheless, after four years the Committee had reported that the mountainsides had recovered their green covering composed of typical alpine vegetation. Along the paths can be clearly seen great masses of the elegant bracken fern (*Pteris aquilina*) occupying areas open to the sun at the margins of woods, while between the rocks, *Asplenium ruta-muraria* is abundant, and amongst the thick groups of *Athyrium*, here and there the common polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*).

But on the other hand it has become more difficult to find the cyclamen. The catastrophe has in fact carried away its special natural habitat, though sweet violets (*Viola odorata*) occur occasionally. In other areas, heaths, (*Erica carnea*) flourish in quantity, also the broom (*Sarothamnus scoparius*) and whortleberries (*Vaccinium myrtillus*).

The woods are characterised by chestnut (*Castanea vulgaris*), oaks (*Quercus robur*), hazel (*Corylus*) and birch (*Betula*).

Where there are only meadows the view is enlivened by the sight of drifts of crocuses, whilst on the rocks a great profusion of "mountain roses" (*Sempervivum montanum*) and small plants of the genus *Sedum*.

From the foregoing it will be appreciated that no special rarities have so far appeared; nevertheless the fact remains that nature has an immense capacity to regenerate a landscape that only nature can create.

MARIO A. CITTERIO, via Bergamo, 38, 21047 SARONNO, Italy.

Monotypic !

"That familiar example in the British flora of a monotypic family, *Adoxa* in the Adoxaceae, must now be unlearned. During 1981 a second genus in the family, *Sinadoxa*, with one species, *S. corydalifolia*, was described by C.Y. Wu, Z.L. Wu and R.F. Huang from Quinghai Province, China, and a second species of *Adoxa*, *A. omeiensis*, was found by Professor H. Hara of Tokyo on Mt. Omei in Sichuan Province during a visit to China in May. Such is the speed of scientific publication in China and Japan that after Hara's new species was published in September, Dr C.Y. Wu published a new genus, *Tetradoxa*, before the end of the year to accommodate it and made the new combination *Tetradoxa omeiensis* (Hara) C.Y. Wu. The Adoxaceae thus at the start of 1982 contains three monotypic genera; we await further developments with interest."

THE SOMERSET TRUST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

SOMERSET LEVELS APPEAL

The Somerset Levels are a unique feature of our country's natural heritage; a vast area of wetland. The criss-cross pattern of fields and rhynes, so full of life – the herons, the dragonflies, the yellow iris and the pollarded willow.

The vast flocks of lapwing and many snipe.

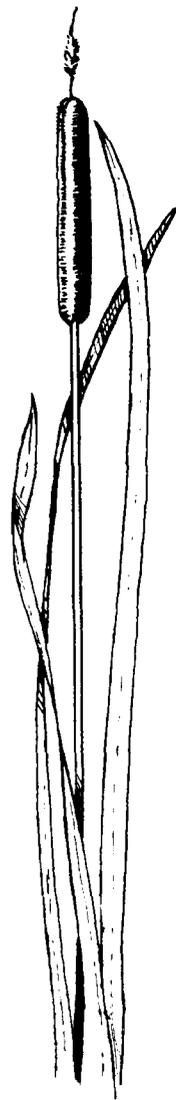
The call of the curlew and the redshank.

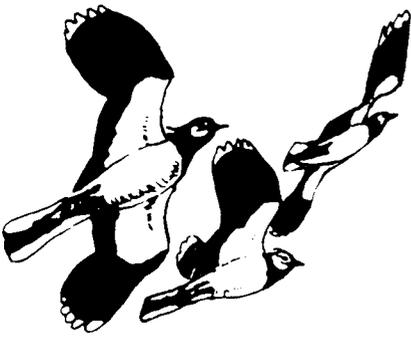
Winter flooded fields with swans and duck.

**It is possible
that this will all
disappear? Or can
the levels survive
as Europe's
last significant
wetland?**

Drainage and agricultural improvement of the levels started 500 years ago, but the pace has increased greatly over the past decade. Traditional farming posed no real threat to wildlife but

**NOW MODERN PROGRESSIVE FARMING HAS
CHANGED ALL THIS**

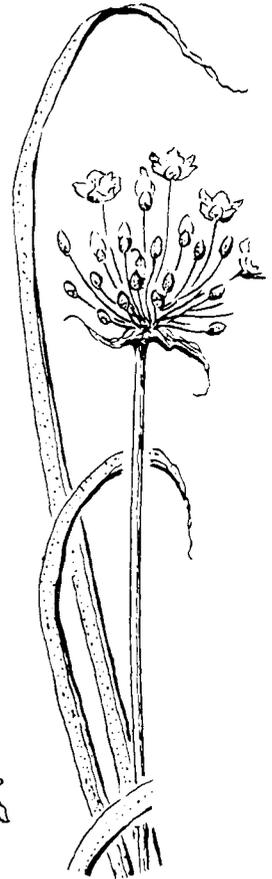




THE PEAT INDUSTRY will all but cease by the end of the century, but what will happen to the worked out cuttings?

Will the clay below the peat be levelled and pumped dry for agriculture? This seems likely for much of the 5000 acres.

The present cuttings form excellent water and marsh habitats and we would like to think of this as partial compensation for lost wetland.



WE WOULD LIKE TO PURCHASE FURTHER LAND on these moors and other moors. A ten year plan envisages the purchase of a **FURTHER 250 ACRES** – but at an average of £1,000 per acre this is a formidable task.

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Address contributions to:
STNC, Fyne Court, Broomfield, BRIDGWATER, TA5 2EQ.

BSBI PUBLICATIONS

Amendments to Stock List, Autumn 1982

There has been a delay in the publication of *The Ferns of Britain and Ireland*: C.U.P. hope it will be available by Christmas, so please be patient.

The 3rd Edition of *Atlas of the British Flora* and the 2nd Edition of *British Red Data Books 1: Vascular Plants* should be ready early in the New Year. About that time we expect to have copies of an English translation of *Plants of the Balearics* by Antony Bonner. If you wish to purchase any of these three books send s.a.e. marked *Atlas*, *R.D.B.* or *Balearics* (no letter required) and we will send you the price as soon as we have stock. Another book on the Balearics is now available: a new edition of *A Guide to Bird-watching in Mallorca* by Eddie Watkinson (invaluable for botanists) £3.00 post paid.

We are also able to offer the following at much reduced prices:

Flora of Bedfordshire J.G. Dony (Reprint) £6.25

Flora of Wiltshire J.F. Grose (Reprint) £7.25

Please note: *British Herbaria* is now out of stock.

Will senders of
REQUESTS, LETTERS, NOTICES etc.
please include postcode in their addresses

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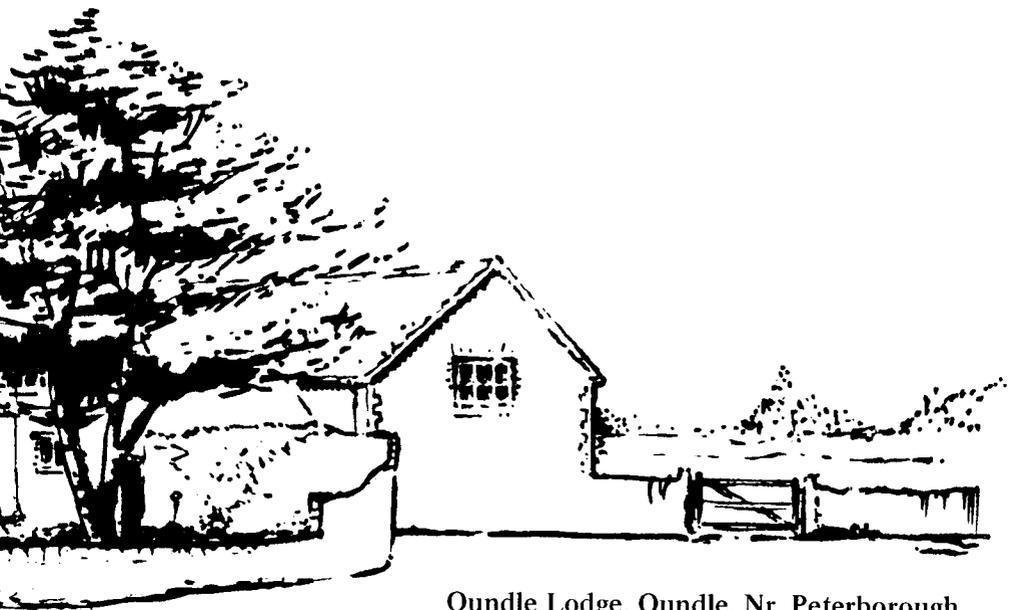
The President, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Gen. Sec. are *ex officio* members of all the above committees.

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Oundle Lodge, Oundle, Nr. Peterborough.

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