B.S.B.I. NEWS

September 1983

Edited by EDGAR D. WIGGINS

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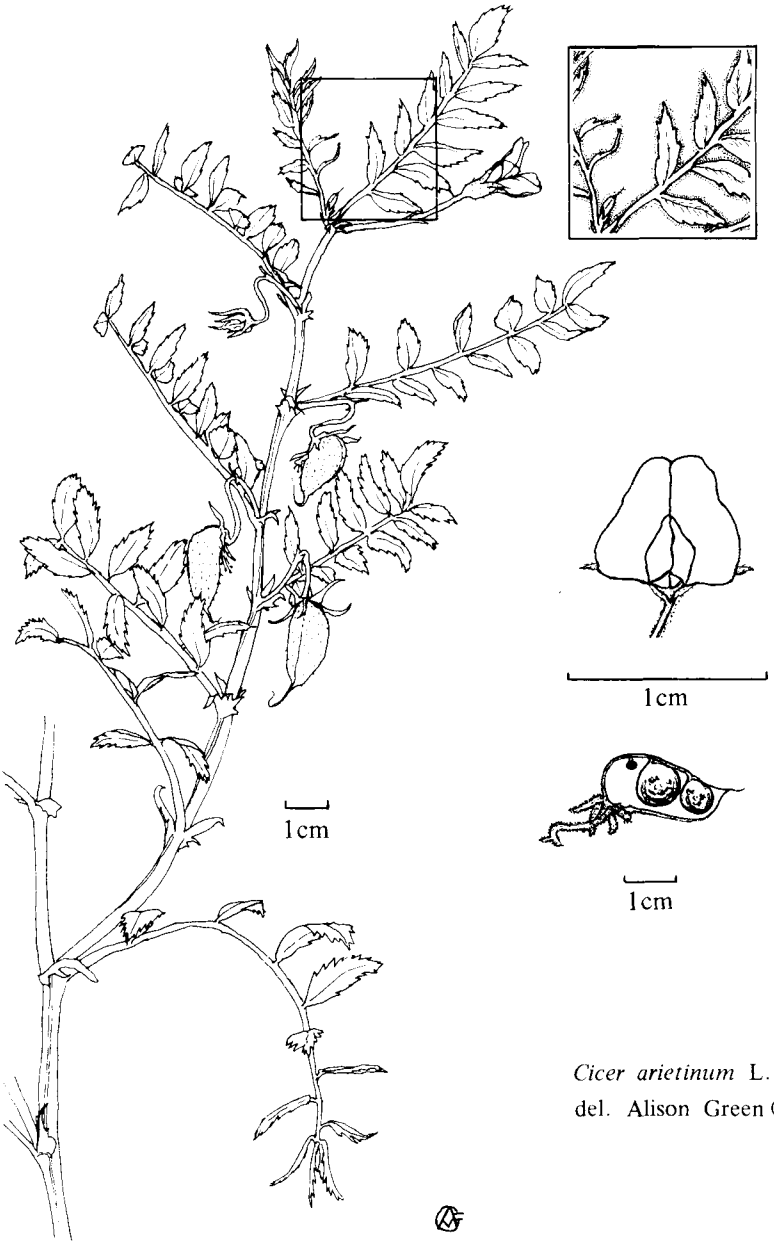

Cicer arietinum L.

del. Alison Green © 1983

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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 Field Meetings)
Mr J.N.B. Milton, Sch. of Biol. Sci., Queen Mary College, LONDON E1 4NS.

INFORMATION ON RARE PLANTS **Miss L. Farrell, N.C.C., P.O. Box Godwin House, George Street, HUNTINGDON PE18 6BU.**

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Contributions for inclusion in *BSBI News 35* must reach the Editor before 21 October 1983

ANNUAL EXHIBITION MEETING – NOVEMBER

The popularity of this annual event (to be held this year as usual, in the Natural History Museum) has led the Society's Meetings Committee to give further thought to ways of improving the enjoyment and comfort of members attending.

To avoid congestion at various strategic places, and for security, members are asked to:

1) leave all coats and bags in the official cloakroom on the ground floor; a warder service will enable them to be collected at any time in the afternoon and *after* the Conversazione

2) collect name badges and programmes on entering the foyer to the General Herbarium and pass through to the main exhibition

3) follow the anti-clockwise circulation i.e. turn right inside the door; all exhibits will be laid out to read from left to right

4) note that between 3.00 – 4.30 p.m. tea will be available in the European Herbarium reached from the foyer and clearly signposted.

All these arrangements are intended to minimise the number of times members climb the stairs in the Museum!

Slides, however will still be shown in the main Lecture Theatre on the ground floor between 4.45 – 5.45 p.m. preference being given to BSBI activities.

The President will welcome members to the conversazione at 6.00 p.m.

Members are urged to note **and please follow** these improved arrangements and look for assistance on the day to the two Hon. Exhibition Secretaries – Mary Chorley and Mike Mullin. The Meetings Committee will also be in attendance; their names are: Norman Robson (Chairman), Joanna Martin (Hon. Sec'y), Jeremy Milton (Hon. Field Sec'y), Ailsa Lee, Elizabeth Rich, Lynne Farrell, John Mason, Steven Renvoise, Elizabeth Young, Humphrey Bowen, Max Wade, Adrian Grenfell, Roy Smith and John Akeroyd.

JOANNA MARTIN, NCC, Calthorpe Ho., Calthorpe St., BANBURY OX16 8EX

Updates – Index,Recorders and Referees

For a specialist Society with only some two and a half thousand members to enjoy such a wealth of services, is only possible because certain members make their various professional skills freely available, a facility which would normally cost several thousand pounds.

We are thinking in particular of the newly compiled Index to *BSBI News* issues 17 to 31. This is the work of **A.E. Moon**, most meticulously checked by him and **Dick Brummitt**. In this issue there are also the latest amendments to the list of Recorders.

With any luck – which in this context means freedom from printing and associated delays – you should find a new updated edition of the *List of Referees and Specialists* in the preparation of which **John Trist** has spent hours of painstaking work. The last appearance of the *List* was in 1979. (If not included in the current mailing, get ready to welcome it at the year end).

This personal contact with Britain's leading botanical authorities is one of the privileges most cherished by BSBI Members, but is only one of several. It is as well to think of these people who provide such valuable services when paying your (very modest) subscription.

HON. GEN SECRETARY'S NOTES

After reading John Ounsted's interesting letter on Childing Pink (*BSBI News* 31, p. 22) I noticed that Richard Mabey and Francesca Greenoak give 'Childing'as an alternative name for the Hen and Chickens Daisy (with its central flower-head surrounded by miniature daisy flowers) in their *Back to the Roots*. This book, based on the Channel Four television series published by Arena at £2.50 paperback, is described as a 'plantcraft handbook' and contains much information on natural planting with a perspective on wild flowers and cottage gardens. Useful hints on growing native wild flowers include practical guidance on planting fritillaries for naturalisation in gardens. There is too, a selection of unusual illustrations.

Also unusual was it to see 3 BSBI members together "on the box" on BBC Gardeners' World in April when Roy Lancaster visited Gillian and Ken Beckett in their Norfolk garden, with its hundreds of plantsman's plants on display. (3½ members possibly if we include young Keith Beckett's brief appearance manoeuvring a wheelbarrow).

BSBI was also in the news in *The Herbalist* Vol. 2 No. 8 1983 pp. 55-57 where David Allen, BSBI Historian, wrote an evocative summary of this society since its formation in *A brief history of the BSBI*,

We are grateful to those members who have, in the phrase of the Corsican botanist Madame Marcelle Conrad, "patiented themselves" and not visited the orchid rarities as requested. We do realise that this is a considerable constraint for those who have never seen them but it is encouraging to hear that the plants show signs of less erosion. Orchid damage is not always the responsibility of humans, as we hear from Charlie Coleman, Warden, Sussex Trust for Nature Conservation, who reported the only *Listera ovata* on one reserve vandalised by badgers using that exact site for a dung pit! However a more sobering report comes from Paul Davies who in one wood known as a rare orchid site found visitors "nonchalantly scuffing dead leaves" with their boots, possibly damaging the very plants that they were hoping to see.

Sadly we report the death of BSBI member **Mrs Sheila Wenham** who was accidentally shot while recording plants on Ministry of Defence property. Sheila and Joyce Smith were at the time taking part in one of the conservation projects in which this society has been co-operating with the MoD to survey sites owned by them. We extend our very sincere sympathy to Sheila's husband and two sons on their tragic loss; Sheila will be sadly missed by botanical colleagues in Middlesex and Surrey where she contributed considerably to recording and knowledge of local plants. The BSBI has sent a donation to her memorial fund.

Tailpiece: In a letter a member, Harold Fowkes writes "In praise of Botany I think we are lucky people to pursue such a satisfying course as the study of plants which combines mental physical and aesthetic exercise in so generous a manner, to say nothing about the social benefits such as the making of friends".

Mary Briggs

BSBI RECORDERS

An updated list of these, published as a leaflet in March 1982, was distributed to all members with the April mailing that year. Subsequent changes have been published in *BSBI News* Nos. 31, 32 and 33. To summarise these for easy references all changes since the March 1982 List are given below:

VC Recorders – Amendments to March 1982 List.

* New Recorder + Ch. of address ○ Additional Recorder

1	W. CORNWALL	* K.L. Spurgin, 8a Rosewin Row, Truro, Cornwall TR1 1HG.
1b	SCILLY	* Mrs R.E. Parslow, 13 Tithe Close, Hilton, Huntingdon PE18 9NR.
4	N. DEVON	* W.H. Tucker, 40 Pathfield, Torrington, Devon EX38 7BX.
8	S. WILTS	+ Miss A.M. Hutchinson, 13 Sadlers Mead, Wilton, Salisbury, Wilts SP2 0DE.
20	HERTS	* B.R. Sawford, T.J. James, N. Hertfordshire Museum Service, The Old Fire Station, Baldock Herts. SG7 6AR.
28	W. NORFOLK	* Dr C.P. Petch, The Manor House, Wolferton, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE31 6HA.
30	BEDS	* C.R. Boon, 7 Duck End Lane, Maulden, Bedford MK45 2DL
37	WORCS	* J.J. Day, 3 Rectory Bungalows, Suckley, Worcs. WR6 5DF.
53	S. LINCS	○ Mrs I. Weston, Lindhris, Riseholme Lane, Riseholme, Lincoln LN2 2LD.
72	DUMFRIESS	+ Mrs M.E.R. Martin, Rogate, Rankine Heights, Lochmaben, Lockerbie DG11 1LJ.
87	W. PERTH	* N. Stewart, 14 Church Hill, Edinburgh EH10 4BQ.
93	N. ABERDEEN	+ Dr D. Welch, ITE, Banchory Research Station, Hill of Brathens, Glassel, Banchory, Kincardineshire AB3 4BY.
108	W. SUTHERLAND	+ Dr J. Rogers, 21 Gallowhill, Peebles, EH45 9BG.
110	OUTER HEBRIDES	* A. Currie, M.I. Biol., Glaiseilean, Broadford, Isle of Skye IV49 9AQ.

May 1983

Dave Green's appointment to VC 7 N. Wilts, coincided with the publication of the March 1982 List, so that he is correctly named there – but due to this timing his appointment was not announced in *BSBI News*. We now officially welcome Dave as a new Recorder, and he would be pleased to hear from members concerning records and plants in North Wiltshire.

Mary Briggs, Hon. Gen. Sec.

David McCosh, Secy. Records Committee

FLOWERS OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND WHINSTONE

A.J. RICHARDS

There are, in Britain, a number of localities which present unique features with remarkable botanical habitats.

We hope to describe some of these in a series which we asked Prof. Richards of the Botany Dept, Univ. of Newcastle on Tyne to open with an account of an area he knows well.

Most British botanists who have visited the internationally renowned sites in Upper Teesdale and on surrounding fells in the area where Durham, North Yorkshire and Cumbria meet, will be aware of the Whinstone. Its hard, blocky, columnar crags have resisted erosion more readily than the surrounding sedimentary rocks, and now form the most striking physical features of the area, such as the waterfalls of the Tees at Cauldron Snout and High Force, and the cliffs at High Cup (itself a huge ancient waterfall), Falcon Clints, Cronkley Scar and Maze Beck Scar. These are all upland sites, above 500 m altitude, and they bear a distinctive flora which includes rarities such as *Potentilla crantzii, P. fruticosa, Orthilia secunda, Polystichum lonchitis, Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (and formerly *Woodsia ilvensis*), each in several sites.

It is perhaps less well known that the same dolerite intrusion, caused by an upwelling and hardening of magma into Carboniferous limestones and shales in the early Permian, extends in an almost unbroken line in the surface geology for 110 km to the north. It terminates on Holy Island (Lindisfarne), where it forms the 'plinth' to the famous castle, while other distinctive features formed by the intrusion include the Farne Islands and the crags associated with the central section of Hadrian's Wall, as at Housesteads, Haileypike, Crag Lough and Steel Rigg. Thus, excluding the rather disjunct upland southern sites around Upper Teesdale, all the remaining sites are in Northumberland, stretching from Walltown in the south-west to Lindisfarne in the north-east, almost the full extent of our beautiful and little-known county. The Northumberland Whin is conveniently divided into two halves. South-west of a discontinuity of some 20 km in the centre of the county between Kirkwhelpington and Alnwick, the sites are predominantly upland in character (although nowhere exceeding 350 m altitude), and are inland. North of this break, sites are never more than 10 km from the sea and do not exceed 100 m in altitude, thus bearing a lowland type of flora.

The rock is very slow to weather and being very hard, tends to form flat impermeable plates over which water runs freely for 9 months of the year. Such soil that is formed is therefore very shallow and dries out in the summer. Soils are acidic, but mineral rich, with rather high levels of both magnesium and calcium, and as the rock is mineralogically very variable, sharp discontinuities in the flora appear. Dull acidic stretches dominated by *Calluna, Erica, Nardus* and *Deschampsia flexuosa* may be interspersed by communities of *Thymus, Helianthemum, Polygala vulgaris, Helictotrichon pratense, Koeleria, Lotus corniculatus, Campanula rotundifolia* and several more species usually associated with limestone in the north of England. This heterogeneity is aided and abetted by two further edaphic features. Although the most prominent parts of the Whin were scraped clean by the ice, this left glacial drift in the form of clay in cracks and hollows, and the mineral content of this drift can vary considerably. Its make-up relies largely on the nature of the surrounding softer rocks. In many areas the Whin has intruded through Carboniferous limestone. In extreme cases, this has been metamorphosed at the junction of the Whin and the limestone, and areas of marble are common. Unfortunately, the sugar limestones of

Upper Teesdale, which have the same kind of origin, are inexplicably confined to that area. However, surface water emanating from the neighbouring calcareous rocks may seep over the hard, acidic Whin, creating interesting flushes and pockets of soil of a moderatley high pH.

The summits and dip slopes of the Whin escarpment form flattish, very shallow soils which are furthermore usually south-facing (except in the extreme north). Although wet for much of the year, the summer drought is sufficient to ensure that they remain very open (and have presumably remained so since before post-glacial afforestation). The flora of these areas is dominated by annuals, of which over 50 species have been recorded. Thus, they are best visited in April, for by June they have become sere and dry. It is interesting to see such species as *Senecio vulgaris, Capsella bursa-pastoris, Sisymbrium officinale, Veronica arvensis, Malva sylvestris* and *M. neglecta*, among many, as presumably native plants in habitats that have remained little changed since before the advent of agriculture.

Perennial species that do persist, do so in the slightly deeper soils of cracks, crevices etc., and are dominated by *Festuca ovina*, and *Deschampsia flexuosa*, although a wide range of perennial herbs and dwarf shrubs occurs. Some have been mentioned above. All are xeromorphic to some extent, and many aestivate, by bulbs (*Allium vineale, A. oleraceum, A. schoenoprasum, Scilla verna*), by leaf-axil bulbils (*Saxifraga granulata*) or by merely dying back for the summer. Others are succulent (*Sedum acre, S. album, S. villosum*), or have needle leaves like *Erica cinerea*.

On the scarp slopes, the picture is very different. Cliffs may be up to 80 m in height and nearly vertical, usually forming a blocky boulder scree at the base. As these cliffs are most usually north-facing they are cool and moist, and have been able to accumulate a good soil in cracks and amongst boulders. A thin woodland has usually been able to establish at the base, and trees may inhabit crevices right up the cliff. Many of these woods still persist, although some have been felled and others have been replaced by conifers. The native species are characteristically Rowan and Birch, with a little Ash and some Scot's Pine, which may or may not be introduced. At least ten species of fern have been recorded on these cliffs, of which *Cryptogamma crispa* (in the west, often associated with *Lycopodium selago*) and *Dryopteris abbreviata* are probably the most interesting.

To the southern Botanist, interest in the north-east of England appears to have been restricted to the coast in the region of Lindisfarne, and to Upper Teesdale. It seems to have escaped general attention that two important habitat types, each of which have a distinctive suite of rare plants, appear to be confined to Northumberland. Neither of these appears to have received any formal description, even in the recent National Vegetation Survey. One of these habitats, the natural heavy-metal shingles of the North Tyne and the Allens, does not concern us here. However, the Northumberland Wildlife Trust has been so concerned about this habitat and its protection that it has surveyed all the sites, as a result of which 3 of the most important are now reserves and 2 more have some form of management agreement.

Similarly, we have been very worried about the fate of the lowland Whinstone sites. Whinstone is extensively quarried, especially for roadstone, as it weathers well, and many of the major outcrops have been partly or completely quarried away. There are still active quarries at 5 sites. In many other sites, the ploughing, fertilising and reseeding on Whin grasslands has rapidly destroyed many important habitats; as many as a quarter of those recognised as being of SSI status 25 years ago are now worthless; most of the remainder have proved too steep, or have too

shallow soils and have escaped imrovement up to now. With the financial co-operation of the British Ecological Society, the Northumberland National Park, the Countryside Commission and the Northumberland County Council, Ian Bainbridge of the Trust and I have supervised surveys of all the Whin sites. The southern sites were surveyed in 1980 by Helen Lee and Sue Penn. The northern sites have been surveyed in 1981 and 1982 by Charles Douglas. As a result of these very excellent and thorough surveys, we now have a clear idea of the status and quality of, and the threats to all the Northumberland Whin sites. We also have a clear idea about the status and population sizes of the rare species of the Whin, the important icing on the cake, of which more in a minute.

There remain approximately 40 sites on which important examples of the various types of Whin flora remain, a depressingly small sample. Two of these are now local nature reserves and those arund Dustanburgh, Lindisfarne and the Farne Islands are under the control of the National Trust, while the Roman Wall sites are under the close supervision of the Northumberland National Park. Although these sites are safe from major alterations, they are mostly subject to very heavy visitor pres sure and severe erosion. While there is no doubt that some erosion helps keep the communities open and favours the rich annual flora, the level of trampling on sections of the Roman Wall is inimical to all plant growth. Other areas under some form of nominal protection are suffering severely from large populations of overwintering supplementary-fed cattle. In non-protected sites, quarrying and land-improvement still greatly threaten the remaining sites of this unique habitat, and the Trust is working hard to combat these threats.

Why should these sites be important? Apart from having unique assemblages of species, there are several rarities. Perhaps the best known is chives, *Allium schoenoprasum*, which has 6 stations on the Whin, a third of all those in the country. These vary from a few wisps to great solid patches 50 metres across. The most esoteric, perhaps, is a recently discovered *Alchemilla* (*A. gracilis*), apparently native, the only 2 British sites of which appear to be on the Whin. A very interesting *Potentilla*, perhaps best referred to *P. crantzii*, but with some characters of *P. tabernaemontani*, occurs near the sea in the north of the county. Other seaside rarities include *Scilla verna*, (the only east-coast English site) *Dianthus caryophylleus* and *Allium oleraceum*. *Sedum villosum* unexpectedly turns up on two sites (with chives both times), not far above sea-level. The annuals include a number of scarce species such as *Moenchia erecta, Scleranthus annuus, Filago minima, Trifolium scabrum, T. striatum* (in one site 9 species of *Trifolium* occur in the same number of square metres, beat that, Lizard!), *Geranium columbinum* and *Myosotis discolor*, but it is the huge numbers and great diversity of the annuals that beguiles. Equally characteristic are several local perennial species that are ever-present on the Whin, occurring on most good sites, but are otherwise more or less absent from north-east England. Foremost among these are *Saxifraga granulata* (over 50 sites) and *Dianthus deltoides* (over 40 sites). *Allium vineale, Helianthemum chamaecistus* and *Solidago virgaurea* also deserve an honorable mention in this context. *Campanula rotundifolia* and *Galium verum* colour large tracts of Whin grassland in late summer, as do *Stachys betonica* and *Teucrium scorodonia*. A curious and worthwhile assemblage indeed!

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL BOTANICAL AND ZOOLOGICAL EXPEDITION TO EAST KENYA 1982

In addition to the brief account of his expedition printed below, Jonathan Briggs sent a copy of his full report to BSBI and also put on a display at the Exhibition Meeting in November 1982.

The BSBI awarded me £100 from the Warburg Memorial Fund towards my costs on this Expedition. I would like to thank the Society for this donation which was not insignificant in relation to the total expedition budget.

The trip was planned and run wholly as a student venture, and I was the only botanist in a group of four. We were in Kenya for two months in the summer of 1982, studying the ecology and conservation requirements of mangrove swamp along the southern Kenya coast.

Several interesting aspects of swamp botany were investigated. One of these was the mysterious 'sand-drowning' of mangrove trees. The trees have aerially projecting pneumatophores (breathing roots) to cope with the anaerobic mud substrate. Drifts of sand on to a large area of pneumatorphores can result in tree death. Various stages of this phenomenon (which was surpisingly common) were seen. Another intriguing feature of the swamps was the abundance of mistletoes on the trees. Three species were recorded, two of Loranthaceae sensu stricto (showy mistletoes) and one of the more familiar Viscaceae ('Christmas mistletoes'). I am now investigating the haustorial anatomy of the Loranthaceae material collected.

Exploitation on an alarmingly large scale occurred in all the swamp areas we visited, mangrove wood being much sought after for timber and fuel, depending on species. As yet there is no legislation to protect mangrove swamp in Kenya, we saw very little natural regeneration occuring.

Overall the expedition was a great success for all concerned. It was certainly a very good introduction to the delights of tropical botany which can be utterly bewildering! If anyone is interested in further details, I have a very limited supply of the Expedition Report at £1 post free.

JONATHAN BRIGGS, 86 Carol Avenue, BROMSGROVE, Worcs., B61 8RW.

LATHYRUS HIRSUTUS L. in W. KENT

In early July 1983 a colony of *Hairy Vetchling*, very rarely recorded in Kent, was discovered between Hartley and Fawkham. The species grows in open chalk scrub, consisting mainly of *Dogwood* and *Rosa sp.*, with calcicoles such as *Viola hirta* present, but the dominant grass is *Arrhenatherum*, indicating a likelihood of some disturbance in the past. Unlike the few previous Kent occurrences, the plant is present in very large quantity; however there is some doubt whether this species is native in Britain or not, among those who concern themselves with such things. The one Kent record in Atlas of the Kent Flora (from Leysdown) could be the result of drifted seeds, since *Lathyrus hirsutus* is frequent in parts of the estuarine coast of South Essex.

The colour of the standard petal is purple, not red as stated in C.T.W., Flora Europaea and Butcher. Collins' Pocket Guide gets it right!

J.R. PALMER, 19 Water Mill Way, S. Darenth, DARTFORD, Kent DA4 4BB.

WESTERN ISLES INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ACTION BY BSBI

Readers will have seen in *BSBI News* 33 (Apr. 1983), pp. 26-27, an outline of this programme and its serious potential effects on the wildlife of the Western Islands of Scotland, in particular the machair and other important plant localities. The seriousness of the threat became apparent during last year and there seemed an urgent and clear case for the BSBI to make its concern known, and accordingly I wrote on behalf of BSBI on 7 September 1982 to the Secretary of State for Scotland, saying "while in favour of a programme designed to improve life in the Island, we are concerned lest it s;hould entail developments which could damage seriously or destroy irreplaceable parts of the unique vegetation of the Islands .... and the Society would be happy to advise or give what help it can and .... we will send you further and fuller information as soon as possible".

This drew a helpful reply from Mr Frank Lawrie of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, in which he stated that in addition to the existing provisions for protecting National Nature Reserves and SSSI's the Project Team and departmental staff of WIIDP would be taking advice from the Nature Conservancy Council about areas where significant damage to wildlife or habitats might occur. The offer of a report from BSBI on rare plants and their localities was welcomed.

Mary Briggs accordingly called for information on rare plants and botanically rich sites from BSBI members known to have botanised in the Western Isles. It was intended that our report should be synchronised with information from NCC, but the urgency to act made this impossible and the report from BSBI alone was sent to Mr Lawrie on 10 February 1983; this was subsequently to be circulated to those administering the land-development measures under WIIDP.

Finding difficulties while the report was being drawn up, another potentially serious snag appeared: although the Programme was an "integrated" one, and the European Parliament voted in October 1982 to set aside 10% of the Programme budget to cover adverse effects on the environment, it appeared from a debate on the Programme in the House of Lords that no funding for environmental protection was available! I'll refrain from making the comments that my readers will eloquently supply!

In reply to a letter from myself, Mr Lawrie admitted that the financial situation was far from satisfactory, but said that, in spite of the difficulties over European support, "in practice, all the UK public expenditure under the Programme comes from the Scottish Office block with the exception of the funding for the assessment service which as both we and the Department of the Environment agree must be taken into account in computing the Nature Conservancy Council's annual grant-in-aid". In other words, failures in European support would not affect the scale of UK investment in the programme, but the UK taxpayer may have to find more money!

Obviously the situation will require careful monitoring in the future, and more field-work is needed (as was mentioned in the last number of *News*), I hope that there will be more and closer co-ordination with NCC, but in any event a channel has been opened for the BSBI to make future representations about the Programme should these be needed.

Also, importantly, it is evident that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, which is administering that part of the programme affecting BSBI, welcomes the Society's advice and comments.

PATRICK BRENNAN, (Past-President BSBI 1981-3.), 24 Taylor Avenue, Kew Gardens, RICHMOND, Surrey TW9 4ED.

TROPICAL DRIFT SEEDS

1983 looks like being one of the most remarkable years for the stranding of tropical seeds on beaches in Britain and Ireland. Mind you, it has been a remarkable year too, in other respects; large turtles captured off the Irish coast and porpoises playing in the English Channel! The extraordinary feature of the 1983 drift seed haul is that two beaches, Castlegregory (Co. Kerry) and Hayle (Cornwall), have yielded almost all the records including new seed species. Both also produced large strandings (of over 40 seeds) which is a phenomenon not previously reported. I am most grateful to J.V. Dennis and L.P. Williams for allowing me to see their specimens – Mr. Dennis's seeds are now in **DBN**.

The purpose of this note is not to give the details of the season's material in full, but to highlight some of the seeds so that beach-combers can keep their eyes open for material. In the past, we have assumed that seeds come ashore in Europe in ones or twos; (see *Watsonia* **12**:103-112, 1978). Very rarely have larger numbers been reported from European beaches, and when large strandings were noted we have tended to dismiss these as the results of a cargo loss (e.g. the appearance of Brazil nuts in Kerry in 1965). However, in April 1983 at Castlegregory on the north coast of the Dingle Peninsula (County Kerry) my colleague John Dennis collected 45 seeds (4 specimens of the nickar nut *Caesalpinia bonduc* (6), 4 seeds of the seaheart *Entada gigas* (1) and 37 seeds of morning glory *Ipomoea* spp. (9 & 10). These seeds came from a stretch of beach measuring about 200 metres – the rest of this long beach yielded no seeds at all. The *Ipomoea* seeds are the first recorded from European beaches. John Dennis later found *Ipomoea* seeds at Hayle in Cornwall.

John Dennis's extraordinary collection has now been exceeded by that of L.P. Williams of Hayle in Cornwall. Since April, Mr. Williams has combed the local beach and obtained more than 200 seeds. On one occasion (12 June 1983) he collected 57 specimens. Eight species may be represented in the Hayle collection, although the *Ipomoea* seeds pose considerable identification problems.

The seeds depicted opposite include the majority of species found most frequently on European beaches. The following brief notes may help identification.

1. *Entada gigas* – seaheart. Dark brown in colour, ranging in size from about 3 to 6 cm across. This is the most conspicuous seed and therefore the most frequently collected one (but see 9 & 10). Used long ago to make snuff-boxes. Now alas, imported by the sack load for sale in beach-front shops (this plays havoc with my records!)
2. *Mucuna sloanei* – horse-eye bean. Looks like a horse's eye with a dark brown coat and a conspicuous black hilum about 4mm wide. Frequent – but see 3!
3. *Dioclea reflexa* – sea purse. This can be confused with no. 2, but it has a narrower, lighter coloured hilum rarely more than 2mm wide. Sometimes the coat is mottled or streaked with lighter brown. It has not been reported more than a dozen times from the British Isles – the specimen shown was collected on Hurst Castle Spit in Hampshire in October 1978 by Mrs. Marsaili Ward.

4. *Astrocaryum* spp. – a palm, and the only one reported from European beaches. This specimen was collected at Dog's Bay in Connemara, County Galway by David McGrath in November 1981, and is the first Irish record. Black, looking like a tulip bulb, with three prominent basal pores.

5. *Merremia discoidesperma* – Mary's bean. Dorsal and ventral views. A very rare seed with a characteristic shape and markings. Like a very dark conker, marked with a cross and the hilum shaped like a 'Capital C'. It was considered sacred in the Outer Hebrides – hence the name Mary's Bean – and was kept as an heirloom.

6. *Caesalpinia bonduc* – nickar nut. Like a very hard acorn – ash grey or sometimes yellowish-grey. This was rare until recent reports increased the number of records. It is not very conspicuous, but is easily identified by the hair-like concentric cracks.

7. *Canavalia rosea* – *C. nitida* was reported from Ireland in 1981 (*see Ir. Nat. Journ.*, **20**(10):452. 1982) but this species was collected c. 1900 from the Outer Hebrides by W. McGillivray. Like a hard French bean seed, slightly mottled. The seed depicted was one of two collected on Hayle Beach by L.P. Williams.

8. *Erythrina* sp. – This has been reported only once before from Stornoway in 1906. Mr. Williams' specimen, depicted here, is from Hayle in Cornwall. Like *Canavalia*, but with a wider hilum.

9 & 10. *Ipomoea* spp. (morning glory). These are similar to seeds collected on the east coast of USA and named *Ipomoea alba* but there seem to be two distinct sizes. 3 specimens of the larger one (no. 9) were found by J. Dennis at Castlegregory and at least 60 seeds came from Hayle (although this latter material may represent more than one species). 34 seeds like no. 10 came from Castlegregory and 127 from Hayle. I am waiting for further study to be undertaken before confirming the names. These are small seeds of a sandy yellow colour, but ranging to dark brown. They are the smallest tropical drift seeds reported from Europe, and these 1983 collections are the first made in Europe. I am particularly interested in getting reports of other strandings.

11. Probably *Lathyrus maritimus* – this identification has not been confirmed, but seeds were collected at Hayle. They are greyish or reddish brown about 4 mm in diameter. The probable parent is a native species.

I would be interested to receive information concerning stranded seed from any part of western Europe, but especially Great Britain, as an account of British drift seeds is in preparation in *Watsonia* **12**:103-112 (1978). A paper on the history and folk-lore of drift seeds is in press (*Scottish Naturalist*, vol. 1. 1983).

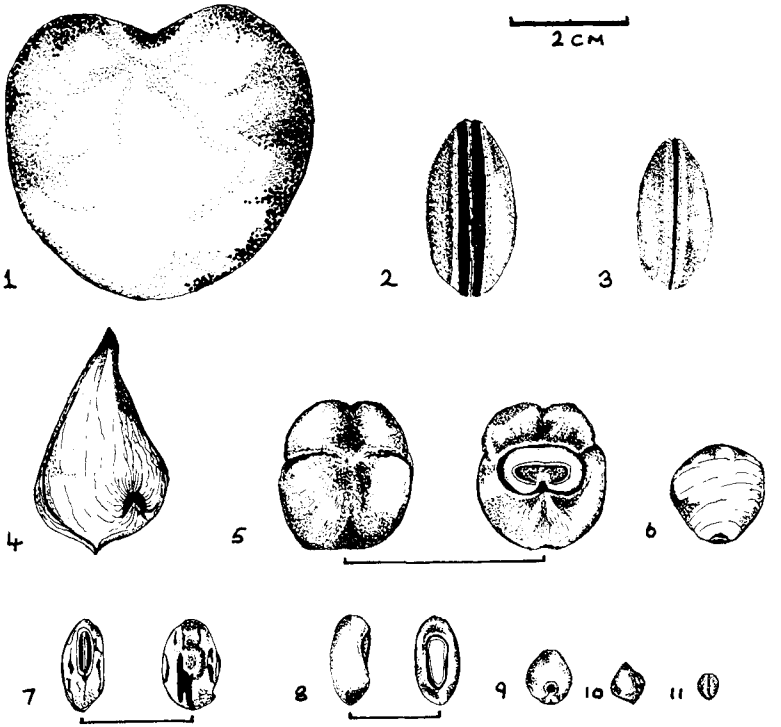
I will attempt to identify seeds, and specimens will be returned if requested. I am especially anxious to alert people to the *small seeds* (especially *Ipomoea*) which

appear to be stranded in huge quantities but which had not been collected until this year. Drift seed hunting requires luck and a nice empty beach just after high tide – happy combing!

The best beaches to go to for drift seeds are those which face west – on the north coasts of Cornwall and Devon, the west coast of Wales (occasionally the coast of south Wales), the west and north-west coast of Ireland, the Outer Hebrides. The seeds are washed ashore usually after strong south-westerly or westerly winds. The best beaches (or at least the easiest beaches to comb) are those with sand, not gravel or stones.

I am also keen to hear from anyone who has seen or who possesses artefacts made from these seeds, particularly snuff-boxes or pin-boxes made from *Entada* seeds. I recently obtained a snuff-box from Cornwall made from an *Entada* with a small silver lid. Museum curators may have knowledge of such artefacts. Talismans (usually *Merremia* and *Caesalpinia* seeds in metal bands for hanging on necklaces) are also of interest.

DR E. CHARLES NELSON, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, DUBLIN 9.



CAPTIONS:

Drift seeds from the British Isles (natural size). 1 *Entada gigas*; 2 *Mucuna sloanei*; 3 *Dioclea reflexa*; 4 *Astrocaryum* sp.; 5 *Merremia discoiderperma* (dorsal & ventral views); 6 *Caesalpinia bonduc*; 7 *Canavalia rosea* (hilar and lateral views); *Erythrina* sp. (lateral and hilar views); 9 *Ipomoea* cf. *alba*; 10 *Ipomoea* sp.; 11 cf. *Lathyrus maritimus*.

Drawings by Bernie Shine.

Requests

FLORA OF THE OUTER HEBRIDES

The British flowering plant section at the British Museum (Natural History) has begun a project to write a Flora of the Outer Hebrides (V.C. 110). It is hoped that it will be published by the Museum and will cover only flowering plants and is intended mainly to bring together all the existing records. Work has begun at the BM on a card index of herbarium records beginning with our own collection which includes over 10,000 specimens from the area, collected by Wilmott & Campbell, and others. We would like to hear from members who have records or private herbarium specimens from V.C. 110 so that these can be added to the index. The BM will forward information to the recorder (Andrew Currie) and vice versa.

R.J. PANKHURST Botany Dep't, British Museum (Nat. Hist.), LONDON SW7 5BD.

The Flora of Surrey – a Supplement

A supplement to the Flora of Surrey (Lousley, 1976) is now in the course of preparation. It will incorporate a checklist of every plant recorded in v.c. 17 and also give the 10 km square (*not* tetrad) distribution for those seen during the period from 1950 to the present day. It is intended to include all native *and* alien plants.

Anyone able to contribute either new 10 km square records for any species or, in particular, any new locality (be it in a recorded square or not) for a plant considered rare or local in the county, is invited to do so within the next 12 months. Details of all significant new localities will be given in the supplement together with notice of new species and those considered to be lost.

Records must be accompanied by full recording details (at least, grid reference, locality, date and recorder) and as a general rule new records for all critical and most alien plants should be either by a voucher specimen or an expert determination.

A.C. LESLIE, Monksilver, 72 Boxgrove Road, GUILDFORD, Surrey GU1 1UD.

WAHLENBERGIA HEDERACEA IN CO. DURHAM

I am attempting to reconstruct the history of discoveries of *Wahlenbergia hederacea* in Weardale, Co. Durham, v.c. 66. There are specimens from one or other of the two known extant locations in **HAMU** (1926, 1947), **DHM** (1933), and **SUN** (1953), collected in the years indicated. The following literature refers to one or the other of these locations: *Vasculum* **13**:19, **19**:108, **20**:154*, **22**:46, **41**:6, **64**:40, **68**:7; *Bot. Exch. Club Rep.* **8**:123; *J. Bot.* **65**:228; *Atlas Brit. Flora* 415; *New Phytol.* **62**:106: *Watsonia* **13**:338*. (*formal records giving location). A possible third location, at present unconfirmed, is mentioned in *Hist. & Trans. Consett Nat. Field Club*, 1954, p. 9.

I would like to hear from anyone who knows of any other v.c. 66 herbarium specimens or of any other reference, particularly any discussion of the status of the records, which I have so far failed to find.

J.T.B. BOWMAN, Hylton Croft, 21 Ramsey's Lane, WOOLER, Northumberland NE71 6NY.

FUCHSIA MAGELLANICA

I have recently carried out a study of variation in the 'naturalized' *Fuchsia* in Ireland. It is possible to distinguish two forms, which have characteristic bud shapes.

These are:

(1) a form, rare in Ireland, which has elegant, long, thin buds. Just before the bud bursts open, it is about 17 mm long (from the base of the pedicel) and at most 6 mm wide at the broadest point. This form is tentatively denominated as *Fuchsia magellanica sensu stricto*.

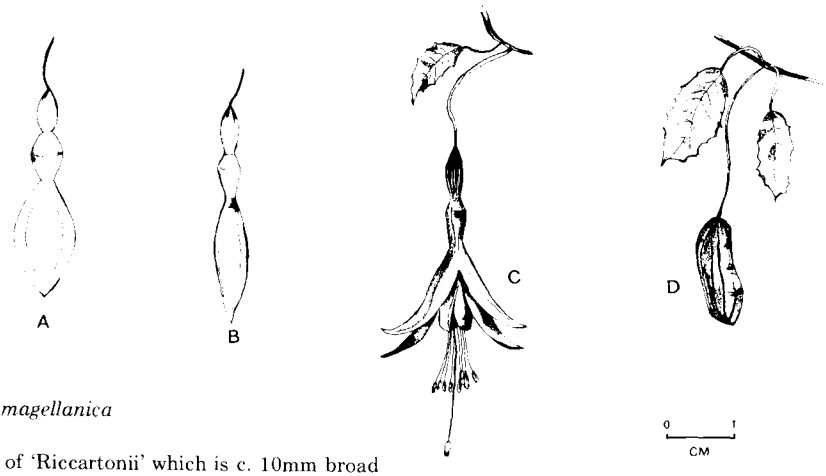
(2) The more frequent form in Ireland, has squat, fat buds, about 17 mm long and twice as wide as the former type, about 10 mm broad. This is tentatively denominated as ***Fuchsia magellanica*** cv. Riccartonii.

The differences in bud shape are reflected in the dimensions of the red sepals; in the thin-budded form the sepals are about 4 mm broad and have more or less parallel sides. In the fat-budded form the sepals are 7-9 mm broad and tend to be lanceolate-ovate.

A further difference is noted in Ireland. The thin-budded form appears to produce small quantities of fruit containing viable seeds, but the fruits on the fat-budded form almost invariably drop before maturity.

I should like to obtain information on the distribution of these two form of *Fuchsia magellanica* from Great Britain. Specimens may be sent (marked 'For Scientific Investigation only') to me, but this should not be necessary. I need the following information – form found (i.e. *F. magellanica* s.s., or *F. 'Riccartonii'*), locality and 10km grid square reference. I would also like to know if mature, well-swollen berries are on the bushes (these should be obvious from August until the first frosts).

DR E. CHARLES NELSON, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, DUBLIN 9.



Fuchsia magellanica

A – bud of 'Riccartonii' which is c. 10mm broad
B – bud of Fuchsia magellanica type which is c. 4mm broad
C – fully open flower of B

del. Bernie Shine ©1983

John Simpson Tyerman (c. 1830 - 1889)

"I am seeking information on the above who died at Tregony, Cornwall 24 Nov. 1889. He was Curator of the Liverpool Botanic Garden from 1841 until about 1870 when he retired "to the south" (presumably Cornwall?). He apparently specialised in ferns (see *British Fern Gazette* 1923, pp. 53-4), but his interests were zoological as well as botanical. While in Liverpool he amassed a fine collection of Mollusca, especially rich in tropical landsnails and this has recently come to light and is being put in order. It appears that the shell-collection was not taken to Cornwall, but its history between about 1870 when Tyerman went "south" and 1908 when Robert Standen examined it in Liverpool, pronouncing it to be an outstandingly good collection, is not known.

Any information concerning Tyerman, the man and his collections (? had he a herbarium), please, to:
MRS NORA F. McMILLAN, The Nook, Uplands Road, BROMBOROUGH, Merseyside L62 2BZ.

Milium spp.

I am currently working on the cytology of *Milium effusum* and *M. vernale* (Gramineae). I would be grateful for seed of these species from any known site in the British Isles, or elsewhere. Postage will refunded.

DR SANDRA M. THOMAS, Dep't of Biological Sciences, University of London Goldsmiths' College, Rachel MacMillan Building, Creek Rd, Deptford, LONDON SE8 3BU.

POLYGONATUM SPP.

I am currently undertaking chromosome and breeding system studies on the British species of the genus *Polygonatum* (Mill) and I would be pleased to hear of any sites where either *P. multiflorum* (L). All, or especially *P. odoratum* (Mill) Druce can be found. I would also be most grateful to receive any seed collected from wild plants accompanied by site details. Postage will be refunded.

T.H. GRAY, Dep't of Biological Sciences, University of London Goldsmith's College, Rachel MacMillan Building, Creek Rd, Deptford, LONDON SE8 3BU.

Books wanted

Will any member willing to dispose of the following:
Ross-Craig, Stella, *Drawings of British Plants* Parts 20, 21, 27 please contact,
P. HOLWAY, Harbour View, Trewince, ST. MARY'S, Isles of Scilly TR21 0NW.

WELSH BULLETIN

Received recently by *BSBI News* was *Welsh Bulletin* No. 38 (July 1983) whose Editor, S.G. Harrison writes in a brief introductory note, "Following last year's disastrous lack of contributions, as a result of which the Summer 1982 number was not produced, I am happy to report excellent support from authors for this number. I am very grateful. Better too many contributions than too few or none at all".

And this issue is well worth the 25p charged for it. R.H. Roberts contributes a profile of Prof. William S. Lacey recently retired from the School of Plant Biology at the University College of North Wales, Bangor.

Arthur Chater writes at length on *Lloydia serotina* in an article reprinted from *Y. Naturiaethur*, which features its discoverer Edward Llwyd who botanised in Snowdonia in the 1680's.

A very full account of the setting up, development and activities of the NCC's Wales Field Unit by Anne Burn affords a useful insight into how the NCC carries out its responsibilities.

The **British Ecological Society** through its Small Ecological Projects Grants supports field work on ecological projects by people not in a position for major funding. Application should be made to DR M.B. USHER, Dep't of Biology, University of York, YORK, YO1 5DD before October 1st; January 1st; April 1st.

The **Biological Council** gives Travel Grants for which post-graduate students hoping to go on expeditions can apply. Information can be obtained from Barbara Cavilla, General Office, Institute of Biology, 20 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2DZ, Tel: (01)-581 8333. The closing date for applications is 16th January 1984.

VASCULA – Special Offer

Since the correspondence on this topic in *BSBI News* 27, 28 and 30, the supplier of new vascula – who is, incidentally a BSBI member and who provided the information (requested by so many enquirers) on p. 7 of *News* 28 – has told me he is discontinuing this line and is offering his small remaining stock of vascula *to BSBI members* at less than the cost of manufacture.

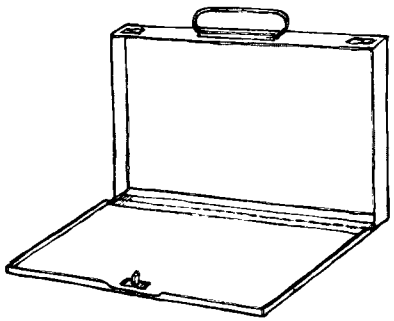
Details are: VASCULUM, GERRARD, for collecting plant specimens in the field. Provides protection from crushing and keeps specimens cool and moist for subsequent identification or use in the laboratory.

Lightweight aluminium, 300 x 50 x 170mm, length x width x depth with full side opening door. Complete with adjustable webbing strap. **YRT-460-J** Vasculum, side opening.

Price: £5.00 incl. p & p and VAT.

Orders should be sent to:

Griffin & George,
Gerrard Biological Centre,
EAST PRESTON,
W. Sussex BN16 1AS.
and clearly marked BSBI SPECIAL OFFER.



THE LIZARD PENINSULA

Those who remember the appeal (*BSBI News 26*, p. 30) on behalf of this unique area will be interested to know that The Bristol University Lizard Project team have recently produced a 40pp. booklet under the title, **ILLUSTRATED GUIDE to SIX WALKS from LIZARD VILLAGE .** The walks described are chosen for a wide appeal and are well illustrated with maps, general natural history sketches and old engravings of the area. The work contains a wealth of information on an area of exceptional natural beauty, each walk being described in great detail. Copies are available @ £1.00 (P & P inclusive) from the undersigned or from retail outlets in Lizard Village: proceeds from sales will benefit the Lizard Project.

DR L.C. FROST, Dept of Bot., Univ. of Bristol, Woodland Road, BRISTOL BS8 1UG.

FUTURE MEETING OF THE BRITISH BRYOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Jubilee meeting, Bedford College, London, 17-18 September 1983.
Local secretary: Mr P.J. Wanstall, Department of Plant Biology and Microbiology, Queen Mary College, Universtiy of London, Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS. (Full details in *B.B.S. Bulletin* 41.)

Taxonomic workshop, Whitelands College, London, 26-27 November 1983.
Local secretary: Miss J. Ide, Whitelands College, West Hill, London, SW15 3SN. (Preliminary details in *B.B.S. Bulletin* 41.)

Spring field meeting, Brecon, April 1984.
Local secretary: Mr P.J. Port, Hollybush Cottage, Newton Lane, Kington, Herefordshire. (Full details to be included in *B.B.S. Bulletin* 42.)

Summer field meeting, Northumberland, July 1984.
(Preliminary details from Dr M.E. Newton, Department of Botany, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PL.
Full details to be included in *B.B.S. Bulletin* 42.)

Paper-reading meeting and A.G.M., Warwickshire, September 1984.
(Preliminary details from Dr M.E. Newton, Department of Botany, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PL.)

The B.B.S. also organizes small informal weekend meetings in various parts of the country and further details can be obtained from the Meetings Secretary, DR M.E. NEWTON, Dep't of Botany, University of Manchester, MANCHESTER M13 9PL.

The University of London Department of Extra-Mural Studies, has given advance notice and dates of commencement of courses for 1984, from which the following are examples:

Simply Wild Flowers: The Taxonomy and Ecology of Angiosperms – Miss R. Evans. Monday 19th September at 6.30 p.m.

Lichens – B.W. Ferry, BSc, PhD. Wednesday 4 April at 6.30 p.m.

The Chalk Flora – F. Rose, BSc, PhD. 7 and 8 July at 9.30 a.m.

Further details may be obtained from the Dep't of Extra-Mural Studies, 26 Russell Square, LONDON WC1B 5DQ.

British Pteridological Society records

Mr R.M. Bateman's note on "Are Vice-Counties outmoded?" prompts me to give the following information for inclusion in *BSBI News*.

Amendments and additions, on a centrad basis, to the BSBI/BPS *Atlas of Ferns* (Jermy et al., 1978) have been regularly published annually in the Bulletin of teh British Pteridological Society and will in future be in the *Fern Gazette* (1983 issue, volume 12 part 5, in press). Full data on these records in the form of "pink cards" are of course lodged with BRC at Monks Wood and if records have not been reported by vice-county recorders the latter are informed.

I hope we can continue to provide this service for those who want to keep their *Atlas* up-to-date and I should be grateful to be notified of all pteridophyte records that add to, or update, the published maps.

A.R. BUSBY, BPS/Pteridophyte Recorder, 42 Lewisham Road, Smethwick, WARLEY, W. Midlands B66 2BS.

TASCO POCKET MICROSCOPE

Since Rodney Burton reported this in *BSBI News* 32 p. 7, the Editor has been making enquiries about this apparently worthwhile piece of equipment. We have now heard from a leading British supplier of biological apparatus who has examined this little microscope and reports that "it is strongly constructed, with good quality optics, easy to handle and adjust".

It would not be feasible to order this item in quantities of less than six at a time, and then the price would be uncompetitive.

Members interested in acquiring one of these should write to the Editor who might be able to arrange a composite order.

BLUEBELL BUDS and *CICERBITA*

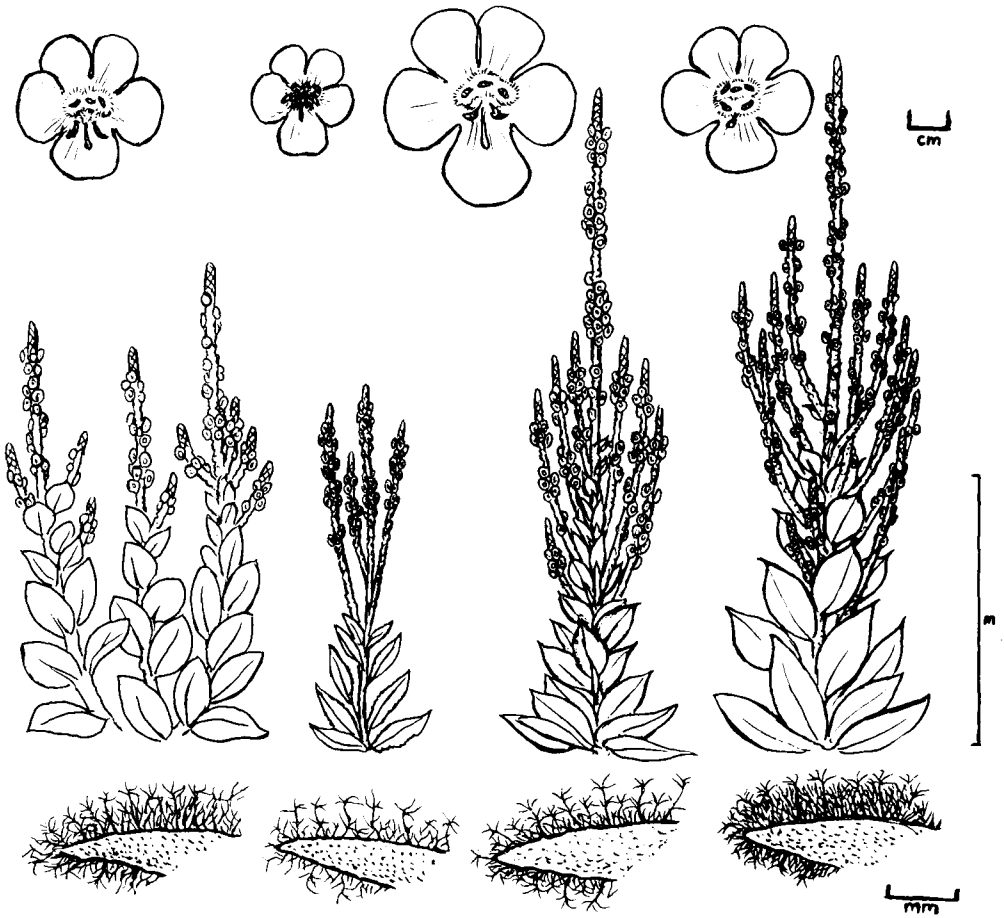
I should like to comment briefly on two items in *BSBI News* 33 (p. 21).

(1) The removal of flower buds of bluebells by rodents is not unusual in woodlands, and at some sites occurs routinely. I have usually regarded it as the work of the wood mouse *Apodemus* and at sites with plentiful *Apodemus* but no known *Muscardinus*, buds dealt with exactly as Preston describes may have had their anthers excised from pure narcotic delectation of auxin traces! The vegetative parts of bluebell are regarded as unpalatable to herbivorous mammals.

(2) *Cicerbita* (p. 14). The genus was evidently more popular as a garden plant in the past. There are one or two instances of *C. macrophylla* in C16-C17 house gardens in v.c. 37, and a quick glance at the literature shows exotic ornamental species in UK by 1596 at least. The taxonomy appears to be confused. Bowles (1914) and Meikle (1963) both describe *C. bourgaei* from what must be two quite different taxa. Views on their worthwhileness vary. One, that their cultivation, "presents little difficulty" must have been held by the botanical equivalent of an estate agent! I find that the flowers of a number of ligulate Composites make strong positive contributions (*Cicerbita, Catananche, Urospermum*), but whether *C. macrophylla* can be thus exonerated for its errant ways, is a matter for the eye of the beholder.

P.F. WHITEHEAD, Moor Leys, Little Comberton, PERSHORE, Worcs.

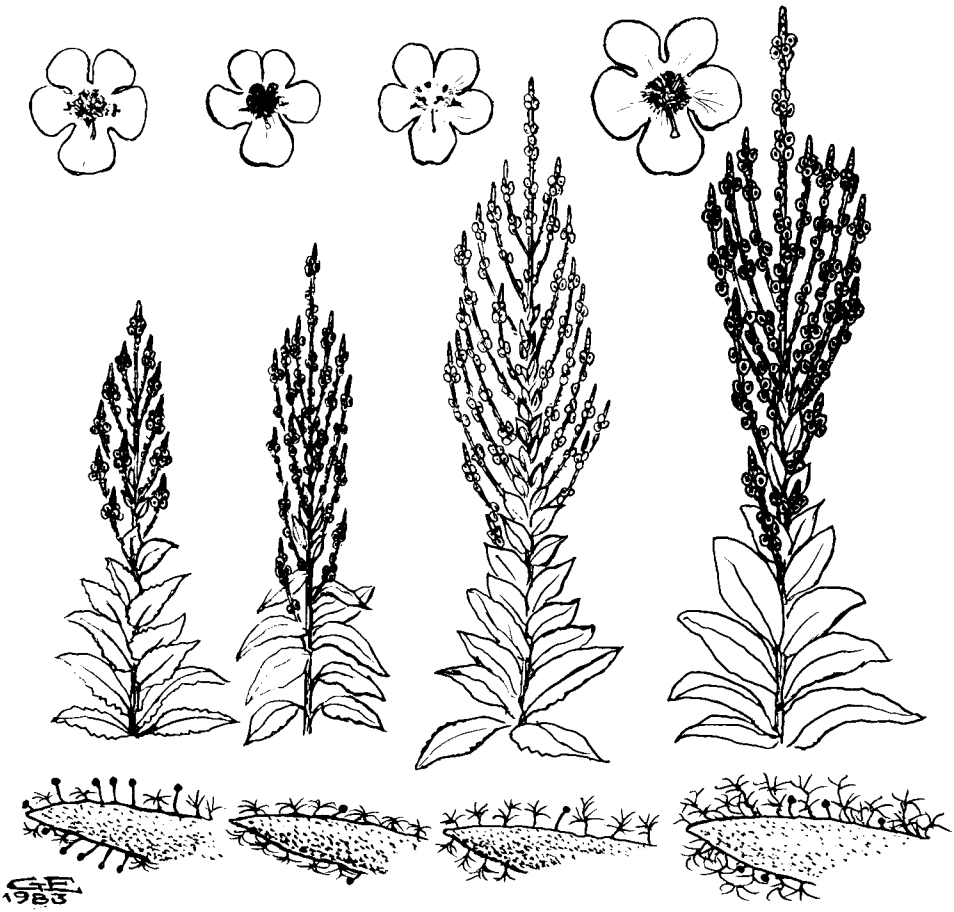
V. bombyciferum Boiss. and hybrids



V. bombyciferum | *Bombyciferum* x *Nigrum* | *Bombyciferum* x *Puramidatum* | *Bombyciferum* x *Pulverulentum*

These somewhat stylised drawings are of a small selection of the verbascum hybrids that have occurred in the garden of Graham Easy in recent years. Specimens selected have been at a prime stage of growth, not suffering from competition from nearby vegetation. Characteristic plant shape, flower features and indumentum of calyx are shown as aids to identification.

V. pyramidatum Bieb. and hybrids



del. G.M. Easy © 1983

V. pyramidatum | *Pyramidatum* x *Nigrum* | *Pyramidatum* x *Pulverulentum* | *Pyramidatum* x *Thapsus*

ALIENS and ADVENTIVES

ADVENTIVE NEWS 25

compiled by Adrian L. Grenfell

MIXED BAG

Allium neapolitanum Cyrillo: Road verge, A372, nr. Langport, Somerset, May 1983, Lady Rosemary Fitzgerald. Det. and Hb. ALG. Seldom recorded on the mainland, *A. neapolitanum* is one of the three oft confused white onions mentioned in *BSBI News 23* p. 10; it is the only member of the triplet not smelling of garlic.

Anchusa variegata (L.) Lehm.: A single plant growing in gravel path in the doorway of an alpine greenhouse, Haddenham, Bucks., April 1983, comm. Mrs R.J. Cashmore. Det. and Hb. ALG. Undoubtedly introduced with soil associated with *Cyclamen* plants collected in Rhodes, *A. variegata* (*Lycopsis variegata L.*) of the S. Aegean region is closely related to and has been much confused with *A. cretica* Miller (*Lycopsis variegata* auct., non L.) which has a more westerly distribution. 1st. British record.

Arabis muralis Bertol. var. *rosea* (DC.) Thell. (*A. rosea* DC.): In considerable quantity on tall slated wall S.E. of Llanderfel, nr. Bala, Gwynedd, April 1983, Mrs G.M.L. Dickson, comm. E. Milne-Redhead. Det. J.M. Mullin & D. McClintock, Hb. **BM.** Endemic of S. and S.C. Europe.

Brassica repanda (Willd.) DC. (*Diplotaxis saxatilis* DC.): Labelled *Barbarea verna*, Trusham, S. Devon, 1877, among several sheets of that species, T.C.G. Rich. The finder finds it very amusing that a species new to Britain should have lain undiscovered in a herbarium for 106 years! Nothing else is known regarding site or means of introduction but presumably the plant was a garden escape or relic. Det. Dr C. Grey-Wilson (Kew), Hb. Lancaster University. The recorder and Dr Grey-Wilson decided that naming at sub-specific level (*Flor. Eur.* 1 lists 8 subspecies in three main groups) was not worthwhile in view of the poor condition of the specimen. *B. repanda* is of S. European origin.

Cicer arietinum L.: Single plant in vegetable garden, Bath, Somerset, D.M. Green. Det. and Hb. ALG. Alison Green, another newcomer to our panel of artists, has kindly provided the illustration reproduced opposite. The Chick Pea is widely cultivated in Mediterranean regions: densely glandular hairy, it bears rather insignificant whitish to mauve flowers on characteristically jointed pedicels and has imparipinnate leaves which immediately separate it from the rather similar but tendril-bearing *Lens culinaris*.

Cistus incanus L. ssp. *corsicus* (Loisel.) Heywood: Large bush on Great Ormes Head, Llandudno, Clwyd, where many othe exotic introductions are known, Mrs F. Houseman, July 1983. Det. and Hb. ALG. The only previous British record for *C. incanus* known to me relates to a single plant in a chalk-pit near Lewes, E. Sussex, discovered by D. McClintock in 1952: it had gone in the following year. Against the finder's wishes, it was included by Dandy in his *List of British Vascular Plants* – one of several entries of dubious value. Diana Grenfell provides the illustration.

Linanthus androsaceus (Benth.) Greene ssp. *luteus* (Benth.) H.L. Mason (*Gilia lutea* (Benth. Steud.)): One plant in a tray of *Lobelia* seedlings, Luton, Beds., comm. Dr & Mrs J.G. Dony. A charming, fine-leaved annual bedding plant marketed under the synonum *Leptosiphon hybridus*, trivial name "Stardust", by a leading firm of seedsmen and looking quite unlike more familiar members of *Polemoniaceae*.

Ruscus hypoglossum L.: Small (c. 1m. in diameter) patch on edge of wooded slope on sandstone, Kinver Edge, Staffs., 17th. April, 1983, W.A. Thompson. Det. ALG, Hb. ALG & Hb. I.C. Trueman. Known since 1970 but size of patch little changed since then, suggesting that it has a much longer history at this site. Associated species *Mahonia aquifolium, Vinca minor, Viola odorata* etc. point strongly to human introduction.

Vicia dalmatica A. Kerner: Mrs D. Maxwell, comm. R.D. Randall. A large, sprawling roadside patch, Coates, nr. Cirencester, Glos. Det. and Hb. ALG. Differing strikingly from *Vicia tenuifolia* Roth, under which it has previously been referred as ssp. *stenophylla* Velen., *V. dalmatica* has very much narrower leaflets and a lax inflorescence of 8-20 smaller flowers compared with 15-30 in dense racemes (one British specimen I have seen sported no less than 64 flowers). I know of no other recent records – is it lurking elsewhere under the guise of *V. tenuifolia?* It is perhaps worth noting here that neither of these vetches appear to fruit well in Br. but both seem very capable of spreading by vegetative means (illus. p. 24).

LONDON NOTES

Sisymbrium irio L.: Some 150-200 plants in flower beds, Mile End Park, London E.1., 1st June 1983, J.N.B. Milton. Conf. ALG, Hb. JNBM. R.M. Burton confirms that this is a new site.

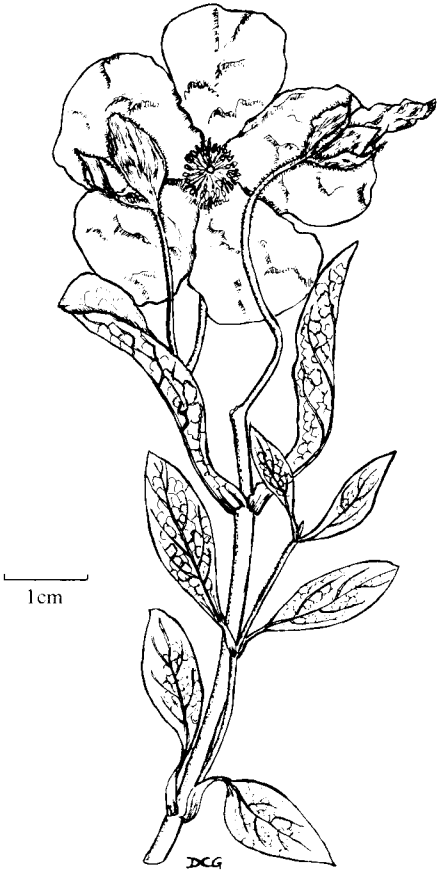
Vulpia myuros ssp. *megalura*: Dominant over several square metres with *Tragopogan porrifolius* and *Hirschfeldia incana*, waste ground on old rubbish tip, Two Tree Island, S. Essex, June 1983, J.N.B. Milton. Det. Dr C.A. Stace.

Lophochloa cristata (L.) Hyl. (*Koeleria phleoides* (Vill.) Pers.): In flower bed, Queen Mary College, London E.1., 8th June 1983, J.N.B. Milton. Det. R.M. Burton, Hb. JNBM. Only third London record for this attractive Mediterranean annual grass, comm. R.M. Burton.

I am indebted to Mr J.M. Mullin, Dept of Botany, British Museum (Nat. Hist.) Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, for his continued assistance. Mr Mullin is especially interested in the genus *Chenopodium* and would welcome specimens of *C. hybridum* to help him in his search for the very closely related N. American *C. gigantospermum* which he thinks could well be in Br. Please continue to send your finds to the writer or Mr Mullin. Full details on 5" x 3" record cards/slips (SAE to writer for supplies) are invaluable for filing purposes.

I hope to be able to devote part of the next article to adventive ferns but am short of material at the moment. Please communicate any such records; city dwellers especially – basements, gratings, bridges etc. often provide fruitful hunting grounds.

ADRIAN L. GRENFELL, 19 Station Road, Winterbourne Down, BRISTOL BS17 1EP.



Cistus incanus L. ssp. *corsicus* (Loisel.) Heywood del. D.C. Grenfell © 1983

Epimedium pubigerum – a correction

The drawing in *BSBI News* No. 33:13 (April 1983) under the misapplied name "*Epimedium pubigerum* (DC.) Morren & Decne" portrays the very different *E. perralderianum* Cosson, an Algerian species. This has a leafless flowerstem with a simple inflorescence of yellow flowers, the petals reduced to small nectaries, the leaves never with more than 3 leaflets. *E. pubigerum* always has a leaf with 9 leaflets on the flowerstem which ends in a branched inflorescence of small pink and white flowers with the petals almost equalling the inner sepals. The rhizome of *E. pubigerum* is very compact, that of *E. perralderianum* more spreading; thus the one forms clumps, the other wide masses.. If anyone wants further information, it will be found in my '*Epimedium* and *Vancouveria* (Berberidaceae), a monograph' in *Journ. Linnean Soc., Bot.* **51**:409-535 (1938).

Prof. W.T. STEARN, 17 High Park Road, Kew Gardens, RICHMOND, Surrey TW9 4BL.

(Will readers please alter the caption accordingly. Ed)

Vicia dalmatica A. Kerner. *Vicia dalmatica*

This illustration has been prepared from a photocopy of the herbarium specimen, followed by a minimum of retouching and camera reduction to 80% size. Members' comments on its appeal and potential value as a means of identification and illustration are invited.

NOTABLE RECENT IRISH PLANT RECORDS

This article summarises the notable vascular plant records published in *Irish Naturalists' Journal* vol. 20 (9-12) 1982.

A summary such as this tends to be somewhat unbalanced in that, based as it is on *published* records it obviously can take no account of the many plant records made in Ireland in the course of any one year which never reach print. Perhaps I may therefore begin by repeating a call to all Irish and visiting members of the BSBI in Ireland to pass on notable finds to the *Irish Naturalists' Journal* for publication in Plant Notes – preferably via the relevant BSBI Recorder.

Dandelions have received much attention from many botanists in recent years thanks to John Richards and his *Taraxacum Flora* of 1972, but most of Ireland remains neglected except for certain northern and western counties. *Taraxacum atactum, T. polyodon* and *T. ekmanii* were reported for the first time from Co. Sligo, a county which is not well-worked for dandelions.

Welsh poppy, *Meconopsis cambrica* is a local plant of a few areas in Ireland, including one station on the south of the Mourne Mountains, Co. Down – its only Co. Down site. It has not been seen there for over a quarter of a century, but a new site turned up on the north side of the Mournes beside the Shimna River – regrettably only one plant and possible of garden origin although it may have been washed down from a native station higher upstream. Another site not far away in a disused railway cutting is almost certainly of garden origin.

In 1980 Prof Webb published his account of the flora of the Aran Islands and in 1982 published in *INJ* some additional records and correcitons. *Polystichum aculeatum* has been found on Inishmore. *Rorippa islandica* sensu stricto has been found near Pollnagapple – this species is mainly found in the west of Ireland. *Erodium moschatum*, hitherto though to be extinct in the islands was found on Inisheer as recently as 1976.

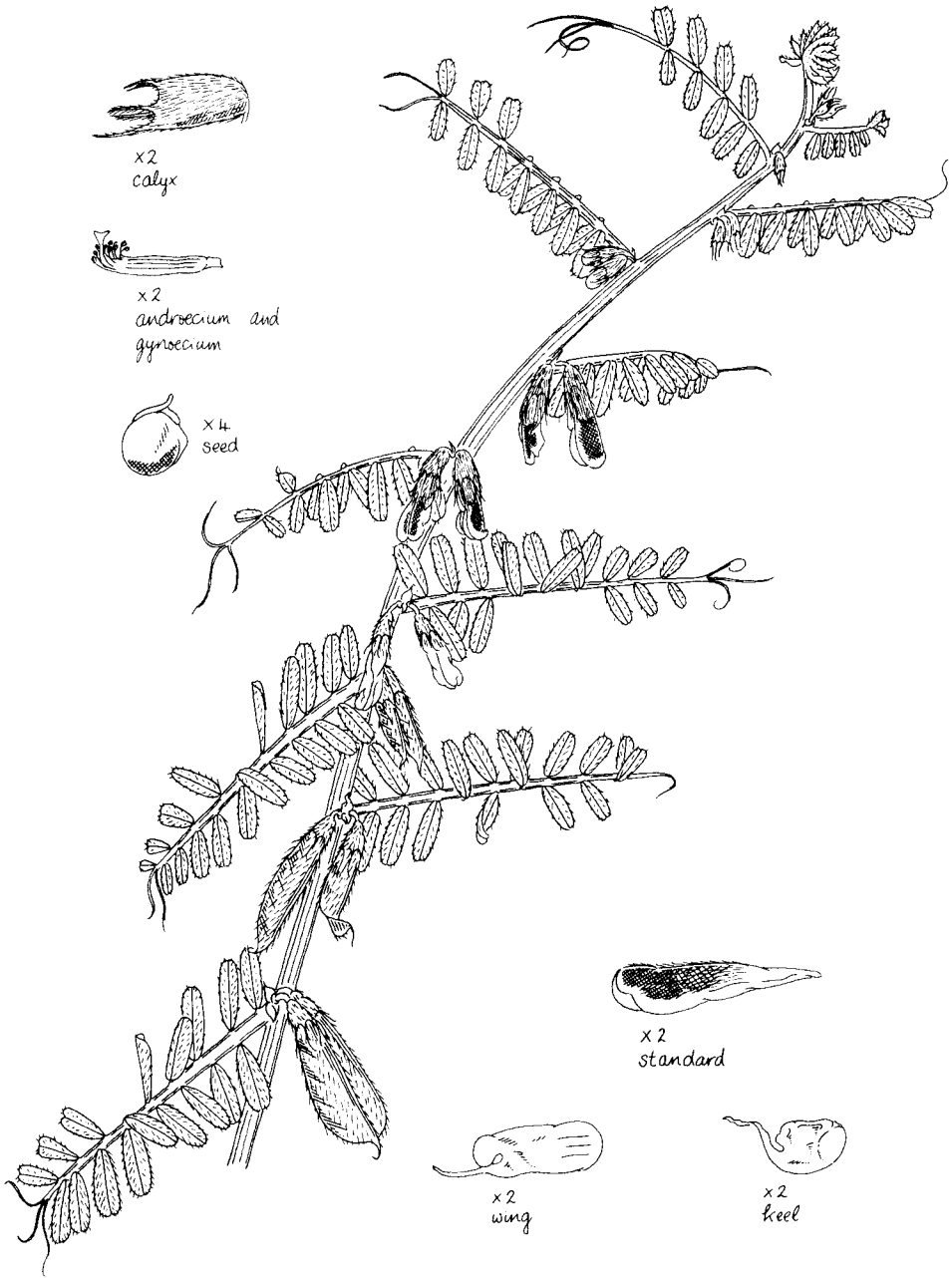
A new site for *Leucojum aestivum* was reported, in Co. Londonderry. Praeger considered this species as being native in its stations on the R. Shannon and around L. Neagh, but the new station ison the lower R. Bann at Coleraine and may also be a native population.

The extremely local *Carex magellanica*, hitherto only known in Ireland from the Garron area of Co. Antrim was found on a BSBI field meeting to Co. Tyrone in 1981. A considerable number of plants was located in wet sphagnum bog about 3½km ENE of Mountfield.

Attention was drawn by Maura Scannell to the presence of *Rumex hibernicus* – (a close relative of) *R. acetosa* in Ireland, where it was first recognised about 1960. It is currently known to grow on dunes in six Irish counties.

A lengthy contribution on the history and distribution of sticky groundsel, *Senecio viscosus* in Ireland has summarised the known records of that species. Three new Irish stations were reported – at railway stations at Tralee (VC H2 N. Kerry), Limerick Junction (VC H10 N. Tipperary/VC H7 S. Tipperary boundary) and Portadown (VC H37 Armagh). Its association with railways has been noted by other workers, such as Sir Edward Salisbury.

PAUL HACKNEY, Dep't of Botany & Zoology, Ulster Museum, BELFAST, BT9 5AB.



Vicia pannonica

6.7.1983

Vicia pannonica

VICIA PANNONICA Crantz STILL SPREADING IN KENT

This annual peaflower has been established in a number of places in Kent for many years, often abundantly. A new area for the species has been discovered this year at Ebbsfleet, near Northfleet Brooks and a specimen from there has been drawn by Hilli Thompson.

As E.J. Clement mentioned in *BSBI News* 17, at all the current sites in Kent, *Vicia pannonica* has occurred with *Lathyrus aphaca* and often with *Vicia villosa* subsp. *varia* (*V. dasycarpa*) as well. It has always appeared as subsp. *pannonica* (with brownish-yellow flowers).

In the new area, *Vicia pannonica* appeared spontaneously in about five places spread over a hundred yards or so, on long established grassy banks where no re-seeding had taken place. The separate colonies from 10 to about 50 plants. As I visit the area several times a year, patches of such a distinctive plant are very unlikely to have escaped attention previously. *Lathyrus aphaca* which is spreading aggressively in NW Kent, has also colonised the same grassy banks recently from nearby sites in which it has been abundant for many years.

It appears therefore that seeds of *Vicia pannonica* can lie dormant for long periods until triggered into growth, and that there may be some symbiosis between it and *Lathyrus aphaca* not clearly understood.

I have noticed that *Vicia pannonica* climbs principally relying on *Lathyrus aphaca* for support. Does it wait to germinate until *Lathyrus aphaca* appears, (or reappears)?

J.R. PALMER, 19 Water Mill Way, S. Darenth, DARTFORD, Kent DA4 4BB.

AN OVERLOOKED *COTONEASTER*

A shrub believed to be *Cotoneaster divaricatus* Rehd. & Wils. (conf. EJC) is becoming naturalised in this part of W. Kent. This is particularly so in the neighbourhood of Eynsford, where there is a colony of at least 30 specimens on roadside banks, some of considerable size, one of which has been used as a basis for the drawing by Mrs Hilli Thompson. Seedlings have also been observed on walls, pavements, roadside verges etc., at Farningham, Crockenhill, Otford and Gravesend. (The record in Atlas of the Kent Flora related in fact to Farningham and the species is not known from New Ash Green). It is probable that this shrub is naturalised elsewhere in Britian, as it seems to be quite common in gardens.

Brief description – medium sized, to 2 m, with spreading branches, some at ground level. Twigs brown, (becoming glabrous after 2 years), rigid, alternate, often all in the same plane on one branch, inclining forward at an angle of 45 to 60 degrees. Leaves 10-20 mm, more or less oval, acuminate; shining bright green above, paler below with some white hairs. Flowers pink, small, produced in threes in May, the middle flower opening first. Plants in shade may have flowers only in ones or twos. Petals 2-3 mm, upright or invurved. Calyx hairy, with triangular pink teeth. Fruit red.

J.R. PALMER, 19 Water Mill Way, S. Darenth, DARTFORD, Kent DA4 4BB.

(Introduced from W. China in 1904, this shrub received the R.H.S. First Class Certificate as long ago as 1912, and was given the same Society's Award of Garden Merit in 1969. It is not surprising that with such an accolade it should be able to establish itself. Ed.)

Cotoneaster divaricatus

SOME RARE ALIEN *POLYGONACEAE*

Alien enthusiasts will much appreciate the latest BSBI Handbook No. 3, *Docks and Knotweeds of the British Isles*. Many rare, and very rare, adventives are given a full-page drawing and description not to be found elsewhere. The *Handbook* attempts to cover, comprehensively, all adventive species, with the exception of a few non-persisting escapes from gardens (like *Polygonum affine* D. Don – but maybe there are no recent records for this Drucean alien?). More surprising is the omission of *P. orientale* L. which, e.g., has two records in *Hist. Fl. Mddx* (p. 618), one dating from 1953. Maybe J.E. Lousley did not know this species? – **RNG**, wherein lies his herbarium, had no labelled specimen, until I spotted a sheet in the "indets". It consists of leaves only, collected as a "wool alien?" (this source I much doubt – *cf.* Probst, 1949) from Coach Road tip, Baildon (M.W. Yorks), Sept. 1965, by JEL, who failed to annotate the sheet with either the genus or family! Also in **RNG** is at least one more *Polygonum* species that no-one has yet positively identified.

A further, unique, *Polygonaceae* record was missed out of the *Handbook*, viz. *Oxygonum sinuatum* (Hochst. & Steud. ex Meisn.) Dammer. One plant, on waste ground of timber yard near sea-front, Seaforth (S. Lancs), Sept. 1967 Dr J.G. & C.M. Dony, M. Briggs & J. Smith. Det. J.P.M. Brenan. The sole voucher was dutifully deposited by Miss V. Gordon in **LIVU**; but in 1974 all the British sheets were supposedly transferred to **LIV** wherein, alas, Dr J.R. Edmondson is, at present, unable to locate the specimen. The industrial dock complex presumably introduced this weed of cultivated ground in Eastern and Central Africa, from the Sudan through to the Congo. It is somewhat *Polygonum*-like in appearance, but the leaves are ± deeply divided into a few irregular lobes. The distinctive fruits are extended at their middle into 3 short, spreading prickles. For a drawing, see G.W. Ivens, *E. Afr. Weeds & their Control*, p. 191.

Pressed voucher specimens of aliens are forever valuable: incorrect dets can thus be rectified at any later date. One example is the v.c. 13 record for *P. nepalense* (see *Handbook*, p. 68). The tell-tale scrap of a specimen lies in **RNG**, inextricably mounted in the middle of a correctly determined sheet of *P. nepalense*. It came from the foot of a wall in Chichester (W. Sussex), October 1968, *coll.* I Frenguelli, and is clearly referable to *P. capitatum* Hamilt. ex D. Don (det. EJC). JEL would never have mis-det. a more representative specimen! Collecting inadequate material, in the false cause of conservation, is a very frequent source of mis-identifications and extra work and worry – and ruined reputations – for referees. (Do I hear all 'experts' grumble in agreement?). John Latham has kindly provided us with a splendid drawing of this species from material cultivated at Kew Gardens. Compare it with the *P. nepalense* drawing (*Handbook*, p. 69), noting the differences in the stem and leaf indumentum, ochreae, etc. Curiously, *P. capitatum* was also missed out of *Fl. Eur.* **1**, although it is very extensively naturalised in the Azores, as I was able to confirm for myself in 1981, and is spreading in N. Portugal, too. In N.W. Europe it occurs as a casual – e.g. *Gorteria* **1(6)**:50-53 (1962) tells of its unexplained occurrence in a beet field in Holland, and provides a 'habit' illustration. More recently, *P. nepalense* has been discovered as naturalised in N. Italy, in some mountainous valleys. Add it to your *Fl. Eur.* **1**.

In Britain *P. capitatum* has been a very scarce horticultural escape, never persisting anywhere out-of-doors, and hence with no records at BRC (*comm.* C.D. Preston). In my own garden it failed to over-winter hence, I presume, its offering by Cheshire and other nurseries as a pot-plant. In addition to W. Sussex, records exist for S. Hants (see *Wild Flower Mag.* **388**:36, 1980), Guernsey (on a bank at Le Bigard, Forest, Aug. 1977, A. Hocart, *comm.* DMcC, herb EJC) and perhaps elsewhere. D.H. Kent reports its presence as a weed (?planted) in greenhouses at Challock (E. Kent). The drawing by J.B. Latham is of a cultivated plant from Kew Garden.

Good patches of this species were noticed growing on a pavement near the Chelsea Embankment MIDDX on 10.10.82, the pink flower heads being visible at a distance. There were no gardens nearby, or other apparent source. (J.R. Palmer).

P. capitatum is a trailing perennial, rooting at its nodes, up to 10 inches tall; leaves elliptic, to 1½ in. long, with blackish, diamond-shaped markings above (always?); fls pink, in dense heads, not subtended by leafy bracts, to ¾ in. across. A native of Himalayas and Khasia Hills. The climate of S.W. Ireland would suit it admirably, but no Hb record appears to exist.

I am greatly indebted to D.H. Kent for much of the information given above, and to Dr S.L. Jury for the loan of Reading Univ. Herbarium specimens. I welcome further comments from Members: I would esp. like to know if *P. nepalense* is still such an abundant weed in the damp, rough part of Marchants' tree nursery, Wimborne (Dorset) as it was when seen by Mrs E. Thorne in Sept/October of 1968 and 1969 (see **RNG**).

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

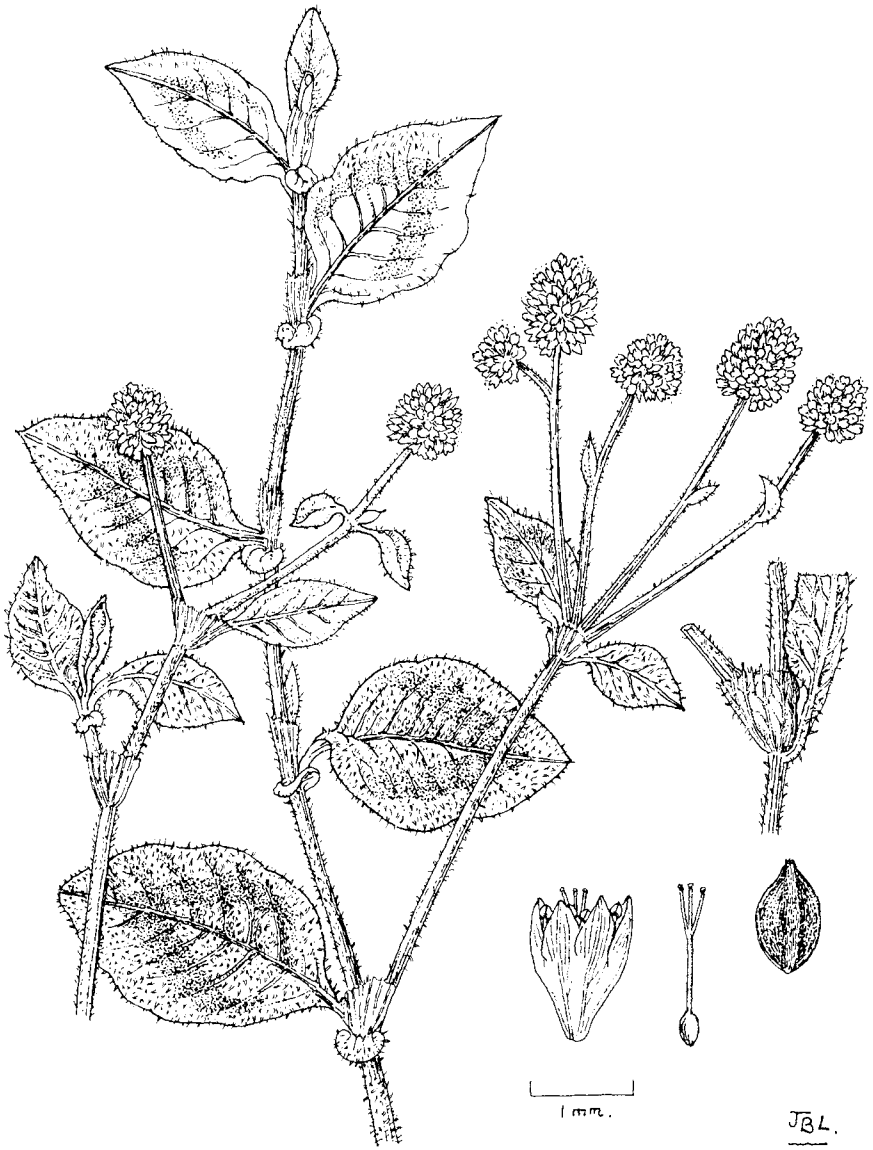
CHILDING or CHILDLING?

With reference to John Ounsted's letter on the vernacular name of *Petrorhagia nanteulii* in the September *BSBI News*, readers will be aware that the English names in the *Pocket Guide to Wild Flowers*, published in 1956, were decided principally on the advice of the late Kitty Rob. It is, alas, too late to be sure whether she actually intended "childling", or whether a *lapsus calami* or a printer's error supervened. "Childing" may have a respectable ancestry, but it is surely obsolete now, except in this context. It may be that the unfamiliarity of the word played a part in the mistake, if mistake it was.

RICHARD FITTER, Drifts, Chinnor Hill, OXFORD OX9 4BS.

Editorial Note

Attention is drawn to a new line appearing at the foot of our back cover. This is to convey that entries appearing in the "Requests" or "Notices" sections (including special offers) are for the exclusive benefit of BSBI Members and are not used for trade or similar interests. All such entries are at the Editor's discretion under the authority of the Publications Committee. Also, it is not possible to make copies available on an exchange basis.



Polygonum capitatum del. John Latham © 1982

PROFILE

JOHN FRANCIS MICHAEL CANNON

The recent opening of the new exhibition on British Natural History at the B.M. (N.H.) will have been attended by some with mixed feelings. The display is staged in the "Botanical Gallery" and has thereby caused the demolition of the old botany exhibit in that room which covered a wide range of plant groups, habitats and topics which were the Museum's contribution to botanical education for the last 20 years. They were also the result of some five years of full-time work of John Cannon, who, as the most junior Scientific Officer at that time, was delegated by Dr George Taylor, the Keeper of Botany, to carry out, with a small team of artists and model makers from an outside contractor; a project that today would take an army of designers, editors, psychologists, production and operation managers. The gallery in its day was successful but it eventually succumbed to progress.

John Cannon progressed in another direction – to become, in 1977, Keeper of Botany. No longer responsible for botanical exhibition in the Museum, he had the onus of 'directing' the taxonomic expertise of his 50 or so scientific staff.

John Cannon was born on 22 April 1930 at Selsdon, Surrey. Of his early life little is known but we imagine he was a serious child. At the age of eleven he went to Whitgift School where he had the good fortune to come under the influence of the late Cecil Prime. After doing National Service (mostly in Surrey) he received early release to go to King's College, Newcastle (now the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne) where his interest in the British flora was further encouraged by William Clark, amongst others. He was in turn, Secretary, and later President, of the College Natural History Society and with them helped in the Survey of Caldey Island, v.c. 45.

On graduating in 1952 John joined the Staff of the Botany Department at the BM, initially to be attached to Section 2 in the General (i.e. extra-European) Herbarium, where after acting as Operations Manager for the Botanical Gallery he began to specialise in the Umbelliferae.

His interest in British botany, begun at school and university, was further enlarged when he spent two summers at Flatford Mill F.S.C. Centre. There, on studying the epiphytic flora of pollard willows, he found (studying the same project on the other side of the tree) a student from Chelsea College, Miss Margaret Herbert. Both the project and the relationship flourished and Margaret became Mrs Cannon, and her continued botanical interest has been a great stimulus to John throughout his career.

Though John never went abroad collecting for the herbarium in an official capacity, with Margaret's encouragement the Cannon family holidays, ranging from Brittany to Crete and Spain, were indeed major botanical expeditions, as herbarium labels in the BM can show. It was on one such holiday on Majorca that the Cannon theory on the formation of *Posidonia* (a Mediterranean Sea-grass) fibre balls evolved. It is not certain as to whether the whole family (there are two sons and a daughter) appreciated their botanically orientated holidays, but the eldest son, Paul, no doubt stimulated and encouraged by his parents, has become a professional botanist in his own right.

John Cannon's interest in British botany was taken further with the B.M. Mull Project. Although not the architect of this exercise, he was the senior member and, as such, administered the fieldwork during those enjoyable summers 1966-70. The flowering plants section of the flora was mainly the result of his hard work, in conjunction with his colleague and long-time friend, Ted Bangerter. His involvement in the Flora of Mull is characteristic: once convinced of the value of a project or idea he commits himself to it and puts every effort into it.

His involvement in the running of the BSBI goes back over 25 years, during which he has served particularly on the Publications, Meetings and Development & Rules Committees. He was Secretary of the latter, when Council finally agreed to the proposal to disband it and form the Co-ordinating Committee. John Cannon became its first and, until now, only secretary, and in so doing has given valuable support to the other Executive Officers of the Society.

A.C. JERMY

A Cambridge rubbish tip with sewage connections

During 1982 there was a remarkable show of alien plants at the Romsey Town tip, the latest infilled pit of the cement works complex that has been rubbish filled since the late 1960's, the area being formerly referred to as the Cherryhinton rubbish tip. The abundance of bird-seed aliens, contrasting with the poor showing of native weed species and garden plants, was distinctly at variance with previously examined East Anglian refuse dumps.

One area of over an acre, looking from a distance to be completely covered by Tomatoes and Millet, was in fact richly dotted with an interesting selection of *Setaria* species and some very varied *Eclinochloa* spp. On a slightly smaller area in a central strip Goosefoot and Black Nightshade predominated and various agricultural crop species were conspicuous (notably Beet, Rape, Wheat, Barley and Oats) and there was a further acre of mainly bare soil with only scattered alien species including several large patches of the Tomato/Millet type flora. Earlier visits, in August and September, were rewarded with the discovery of large stretches where only alien species had germinated and, waist-high, *Panicum miliaceum* was dominant. Later visits, up to the end of November, showed a gradual increase in such invading weed species as *Senecio vulgaris, Lolium perenne* and *Agrostis stolonifera*.

Among the species collected were a number not previously discovered in Cambs: single plants of *Tradescantia virginiana* L., *Abutilon striatum* G. Dickson ex Lindl. *Hibiscus trionum* L., *Eleusine indica* L., *Setaria geniculata* (Lam.) Beauv., *Panicum maximum* Jacq., *P. laevifolium* Hack., *P. capillare* L., and additional millets yet unnamed, and several plants of *Capsicum annuum* L., the blood coloured *Amaranthus paniculatus* L. and a similar straw coloured species, *Tamarix gallica* L., *Brachiaria platyphylla* (Grisebach) Nash and non-flowering *Cynodon dactylon* (L.) Pers. which had colonised one corner of the tip quite effectively. The last mentioned was thought to be in large quantity, but close examination showed that only a few plants were involved spreading considerable distances on readily rooting stolons. Only recorded two or three times previously in the county were: *Amaranthus albus* L., *Solanum luteum* Miller, *Digitaria sanguinalis* (L.) Scop., *Setaria verticillata* (L.) Beauv., and *Echinochloa colona* (L.) Link, each scattered widely over the site; for instance there were 25 plants of both the *Digitaria* and the *Solanum*.

The unusual composition of the overall population called for further investigation since this agreed favourably with the pattern of the adventive flora at the Cambridge Sewage Farm described in *BSBI News* No. 30, p. 28. *Panicum miliaceum, Lycopersicon esculentum* and *Chenopodium album* were in thousands; there were over 100 plants of the *Echinochloa crus galli/utilis* complex, between 20 and 50 each of *Vitis vinifera, Citrus* sp., *Cucurbita pepo, Setaria vividis* and *S. glauca* and small numbers of *Physalis peruviana, Nicandra physalodes, Carthanus tinctoruus, Datura stramonium, Cannabis sativa, Kochia scoparia, Chenopodium probstii, Citrullus lanatus, Guizotia abyssinica, Sorghum halepense* and the *Echinochloa colona/frumentacea* complex. There were also scattered plants of *Melilotus indica, Rapistrum rugosum, Salvia reflexa, Brassica juncea* and the like.

Several species normally abundant on rubbish tips were in very low numbers, there were only 3 plants of *Linum usitatissimum*, one of *Chenopodium hybridum*, no *Lolium temulentum* and scarcely 50 *Phalaris canariensis* on early visits, although there was an upsurge in the numbers of the last mentioned late in the season. Garden escapes were few and far between throughout.

Indeed it became clear that the policy on this private tip, in contrast to Council operated sites in the same locality, has been to cover rubbish with either soil or sewage in a planned sequence. As I had supposed, it was sewage from the Cambridge Works on this occasion that had been used as the final cover, allowing the 1981 deposited layer of rubbish to settle. As the rotation continues so refuse dumping will be resumed in 1983 on this rested site visited in 1982.

Certainly a rubbish tip supporting an abnormally rich alien flora including a high Tomato population will owe its origins to sewage waste rather than be entirely composed of rubbish/household refuse. For a comparison see the account of Brislington tip (*BSBI News* No. 25, p. 17).

GRAHAM EASY, 11 Landbeach Rd, Milton, CAMBRIDGE CB4 4DA.

THE ISLE OF DOGS AS A BOTANICAL VENUE

(In reply to a query, I received the following letter, dated 5 Dec 1982: I think it will interest many of our Members. EJC.)

The *Lapsana intermedia* (or *L. communis* subsp. *intermedia*, as I believe we should now be calling it) grows at the extreme south end of the Isle of Dogs (Mddx, v.c. 21). I first saw a single large plant by a block of flats in Stebondale Street, off Manchester Road, and my guess that there might be more of it in the vicinity was abundantly confirmed when I went on to find it growing in hundreds, if not in thousands. This was what my Philips *ABC of London* marks as a recreation ground but which, judging by local notices, is known as a Nature Park – a curious place with ponies, a flock of sheep, etc. The area consists of a lot of rough grassy banks over which the *Lapsana* is freely scattered, growing chiefly with such plants as *Cardaria draba* and *Euphorbia pseudovirgata* but in places forming sheets on its own on grassy slopes, in a way I have never seen subsp. *communis* doing.

Well-grown plants are quite showy and handsome. Other plants of this area unusual to me included *Sisymbrium loeselii, Salvia verticillata, Bunias orientalis* (this seems quite widespread in the Isle of Dogs) and *Medicago falcata*. Kenneth Bull, who visited the site some weeks later, says there is also a second *Salvia* there – a garden kind, I forget the name he mentioned – and showed me a white-flowered crucifer he had found there and which I suggested, I hope rightly as it is a species I haven't seen for at least 20 years, was *Berteroa incana*. Altogether I found it a fascinating area and wished I could have spent several hours there.

R.C. PALMER, 11 Fleet Way, DIDCOT, Oxon.

BERRY CATCHFLY, *Cucubalus baccifer* L., IN BRITAIN

The previous article puts the Isle of Dogs (Mddx), v.c. 21) back on to the botanical map. This peninsula, jutting out into the River Thames opposite Greenwich, became an island on the formation of docklands there, and the name is said to be due to the fact that the kennels of the palace of Greenwich were once sited there.

The Isle of Dogs found fame as the classical locality for seeing *Cucubalus baccifer* in Britain. It thrived there from 1837-1853 (see *F. Middlesex*, 1869): it is most distracting to note that *CTW2*:227 (1962) *still* lists it as "naturalized" on the Isle of Dogs! (and they wrongly teleport it S. of the Thames into "Kent"). R. Phillips, *Wild Fls Br.*, 1977, provides a useful coloured photo of this species, but I cannot believe his statement (p. 122) that it is "frequently grown in gardens": I have never seen it therein, although the early herbalists did grow it as an astringent! "It is apparently not known to modern horticulture and there is no reason why it should be" is what JEL wrote (p. 267) in *Proc. BSBI* **4**(3):261-268 (1961), *The status of* C. baccifer *in England*. He considered it as undoubtedly native in Middlesex and Norfolk. It is still easy to see this plant in Norfolk – see, e.g., E.L. Swann, *Trans. Norfolk Norwich Nat. Soc.* **21**:378-379 (1970). ELS regards this caryoph as possibly introduced by birds.

Only one casual record of *Cucubalus* has recently reached my files, *comm.* A.L. Grenfell. It is of a single plant on a roadside, near Royal Portbury Dock (Som., v.c. 6), November 1978, found by Dr M.C. Smith, but which alas was not to be refound in 1979. Curiously, dockland acitivities may have introduced it here; but it was the converse situation on the Isle of Dogs where construction of the new docks and associated railways destroyed its natural habitat of ditchside alluvium.

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

VICE-COUNTIES VERSUS GRID SQUARES

It was only be expected that when one of the BSBI's long established practices is challenged there would be an immediate and vigorous response. So it has been with Richard Bateman's provocative letter in our last issue. We print below some of the replies already received.

Those who may be unfamiliar with the system of plant recording introduced by H.C. Watson in 1852 should read the preface to the Roy Society's edition of Watsonian vice-counties of Great Britain *(1960) by J.E. Dandy, still obtainable from the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), London SW7.*

Vice-county recording

Richard Batemans's suggestion (*BSBI News*, 33, p. 8) that botanical recording in Britain be based on 10 km squares is, of course, not new, and the geographical areas represented by vice-counties have been out of date for most of this century. With the production of plant atlases, the stage would certainly seem to be set for the final disbandment of the vice-county recording system, especially as, with the latest (1974) round of boundary-juggling, present day counties often bear little resemblance to their 19th century predecessors.

Why, therefore, have vice-counties as a concept stuck for so long? Although 10 km distribution mapping is of great value scientifically, and especially as a conservation tool, it is not the only aspect of botanical recording. The study of the sites and habitats of individual plants is of equal, if not greater, importance, and it is a fact of life in a country with such a long history as ours that particular sites have had long management histories, related to local landownership patterns, and particularly parish development. The sources of information for this aspect of botanical study are historical records, and these largely relate to counties.

Another important reason why vice-counties have remained so long is the persistent attachment of local amateur botanists to their own patch. If there is a need to encourage field work for a botanical recording project, individual amateurs are much more likely to relate in the long run to a "study of the flora of . . .shire" than to an impersonal enumeration of 20 or so 'centrads'.

None of this precludes the use of 10 km distribution mapping as a tool in the process of recording. A system used by many recorders combines an outline of the county and vice-county maps, with the component squares superimposed. There may be some duplication of input to the national scheme along boundaries, but this is only a slight administrative burden compared with the disadvantages of disassociating botanical study from the history of both landscape and human development. The precise detail of vice-county boundaries may be a nuisance in places, but any boundary (even, perhaps especially, an ill-defined 10 km line) is prone to these difficulties. We therefore suggest that the system be left as it is, while improving the flow of information from observers through recorders to Monks Wood and vice versa. Whether or not a recorder thinks it is worthwhile putting "new county records" in *Watsonia*, however, is another question.

TREVOR JAMES, BRIAN SAWFORD, Joint recorders: VC20 Herts.

Natural History Dep't, Old Fire Station, High Street, BALDOCK, Herts SG7 6AR.

VICE-COUNTIES: A DEFENCE

Mr R.M. Bateman advances the controversial suggestion that vice-counties are outmoded (*BSBI News* 33, p. 8), citing in his support the views of "several eminent botanists/vice-county Recorders" that the Watsonian system is archaic and irrelevant to modern botanical recording. He urges the Society to switch to a system based on grid-squares instead.

As I expect he is aware, this suggestion is by no means new. It was the theme of the Society's first Presidential Address, back in 1968, for example. As Chairman of the Records Committee, I can assure him that the arguments for and against moving over from the vice-county system have been gone into most carefully and that the failure to make the change is not the result merely of inertia.

No one would, I think, want to deny that the Watsonian system has serious defects. Probably the chief one is the great disparity between the vice-counties in their size. Another is uncertainty over many of the boundaries – unless one has to hand the fruits of the late J.E. Dandy's detective work (and even that is not always the final answer). A further problem is the large number of records embedded in the literature which may or may not have been correctly assigned vice-comitally but the basis for which can no longer be established (a problem, however, substantially removed if that notoriously slipshod work, Druce's *Comital Flora*, is discounted).

Despite these drawbacks the Watsonian system has the overwhelming advantage that almost all past records in the literature are based on it. The sheets in the British Museum herbarium are arranged in this order also. This enormously simplifies the task of Flora compilers, many of whom still see a need to go back to square one in their researches (it is only in the South that Floras tend to be into their second generation – or that habitats have altered so extensively that the distant past has begun to seem irrelevant). A vice-county, moreover, unlike a block of grid-squares, has an easily grasped identity. People identify with a county in a way they are never likely to do with a 'centrad' – and the vice-counties, singly or in paris or in clusters, echo the counties sufficiently closely on the whole that they are able to feed on that sense of identification. This is enormously important when it comes to selling local Floras, for who would want to buy the Flora of a mere group of grid-squares? Many vice-counties (like the one I represent myself) are in any case neat and natural entities geographically, and to replace these with an ill-fitting block of squares could only be highly retrograde.

It is hard to believe that it is adherence to the vice-county system that inhibits the submitting of records to *Watsonia*, to which Mr Bateman also draws attention in his letter. The main reason for the patchiness in response is that many Recorders with Floras in hand see little point in duplicating in print – and at no small cost to the Society – large numbers of records that in due course are destined to appear elsewhere. If anything, it is the encroachment of grid-recording, rather, that has acted as the deterrent. Some Recorders who were regular contributors ceased submitting after around 1970, when the requirement was introduced that every record must be furnished with its grid-reference: this made an already fiddly and onerous task that much the more fiddly and onerous and was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. As the non-contributors include many of the most experienced and knowledgeable Recorders, it is hardly realistic to suggest that they be replaced by better-disciplined volunteers.

A Society like ours has to cut its organizational coat according to its human cloth.

D.E. ALLEN, Lesney Cottage, Middle Road, WINCHESTER, Hants SO22 5EJ.

PLANT RECORDS AND THE WATSONIAN VICE-COUNTY SYSTEM

Richard Bateman (*B.S.B.I. News* **33**, p. 8; 1983) praises the new "Plant Records" section in *B.S.B.I. News* and points out "discrepancies between the number of records submitted to *Watsonia* by different vice-county recorders". He further comments upon the records printed in *Watsonia* **13**(4) (1982) which come from only 40 of the 112 British vice-counties, notes the absence of records from Ireland, is surprised that 28% of the individual records come from three vice-counties, v.cc. 38, 42 & 74, and poses the question "are botanists in these three vice-counties hyperactive?". There have always been wide variations in records from the 112 British and 40 Irish vice-counties, and an examination of the records from 1978 to 1983 shows that in that period records have been printed from only 73 British vice-counties and that 28 of these provided less than 10 records each. In the same period records were published from only 3 Irish vice-counties, and one of these provided but a single record. With regard to some of the discrepancies, the Irish choose to publish the bulk of their records in the *Irish Naturalists' Journal*, the cream of the Scottish records appear in the *Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh* and the *Glasgow Naturalist* , while in England many new and interesting records appear in local natural history journals, covering at least v.c. 3-9, 15-20, 22-29, 32-34, 39, 55, 61-68, which includes 16 of the vice-counties which did not provide any records for *Watsonia* between 1978 and 1983, and a further 3 that gave but a single record apiece. As to the three vice-counties referred to by the writer – they are indeed the subject of intensive botanical activity, standing at eighth (52 records), fifth (85 records) and first (140 records) respectively in the total number of records from each of the 73 vice-counties between 1978 and 1983. A further factor is that some compilers of county and other local floras prefer to retain new records for publication in their work rather than donate them to *Watsonia*.

It is further claimed that certain "eminent botanists/vice-county recorders comment that the Watsonian vice-county system is archaic and irrelevant to *modern* botanical recording", and it is suggested that a centrad system loosely based on the Watsonian vice-county boundaries would be preferable and should be considered.

The vice-county boundaries dating back to 1852, mostly relate to physical features – rivers, roads, ancient earthworks, etc., and have a historical basis. A vice-county number often conjures up a mental picture of the area, which tetrads and centrads, based on invisible lines, do not. And what of county pride without which most county floras would remain unwritten? Plant geography in the British Isles dates back to the mid sixteenth century and localized herbarium material to the mid seventeenth century. Data relating to these times and the records of subsequent periods can usually be related to vice-counties but it is unlikely that many of them could be correlated with tetrads and centrads.

The Watsonian vice-county system has been in use for well over a century and, despite a few disadvantages, has worked well. Centrads and tetrads are useful aids to modern recording but should be used *within* the old vice-county system. A "Plant Records" section based entirely on the former would be unintelligible to most B.S.B.I. members.

REFERENCES

DANDY, J.E. (1951). The Watsonian Vice-County System, in LOUSLEY, J.E. (Editor). *The Study of the Distribution of British Plants*: 23-29 B.S.B.I., London.

DANDY, J.E. (1969). *Watsonian Vice-Counties of Great Britain*. Pp. 38 + 2 maps. Ray Soc., London.

D.H. KENT, 75 Adelaide Road, West Ealing, LONDON W13 9ED.

Linking old and new

The answer to R.M. Bateman's query, "Are Vice-Counties outmoded?" (*B.S.B.I. News* 33, 1983) is a firm "No". They may seem so to those for whom the world began yesterday, but for the rest of us who see knowledge as a continuum, they are essential. One of the most interesting things about a new plant record is its relationship to past records of the same species, and the key to this is the vice-county. Nowadays we need to know the 10 km square as well, and of course it is welcome when the recorder gives the grid reference as fully as he thinks desirable. To compare with older records, though, we still need to know the vice-county; it is particularly helpful in Wales and Scotland where the present administrative boundaries bear little relation to history or geography.

FRANK BRIGHTMAN, S. London Botanical Institute, 323 Norwood Road, LONDON SE24 9AQ.

Are Vice-Counties outmoded? NO

What an atrocious thought activated no doubt by progressive professional botanists!

These people think they own the BSBI with their prolix techniques and arcane terminology which even the most capable amateurs have difficulty in understanding.

The v.c.'s have served us well for a long time and will continue to do so for many years to come. There is nothing worse than numbers to put people off botany or anything else.

The amateurs who have been the core of the Society for so long will cease to bother at all. It is the *local* interest which activates the *local* botanist.

Is it in Wilts or is in Lincs? When this local interest has gone so will all interest in the local flora. Few will bother to cope with a lot of meaningless squares.

The object of the B.S.B.I. is to teach botany not merely to provide a platform for obscure articles in *Watsonia* consisting mainly of factory chimneys in varied states of construction.

I hope all members will resist this supposed innovation.

R.C.L. HOWITT, West End House, Farndon, NEWARK-ON-TRENT.

THE BLACK POPLAR SURVEY – errata

In *BSBI News* No. 33 I contributed a note about this Survey to let members know that it is still very much in being. Unfortunately one or two errors crept in. The second line of the second paragraph should read "and is not infrequent in the Usk Valley". In paragraph 5, the name of the Street and Bridge in Bath is PULTENEY.

Here I must admit having made a serious mistake, as I should not have identified the tree in question only from a photograph showing its crown! Dr D.G. Coombe has kindly told me that this tree is the hybrid, *P.* x *serotina*. On my way down to the AGM in Bristol, I visited Pulteney Bridge and heartily concur with Dr Coombe's determination.

The two Black Poplars from Huntington (v.c. 62) are not the first Yorkshire record for the species, as stated in paragraph 6. Dr W.A. Sledge hass called my attention to the "Supplement to the Yorkshire Flora" where he has recorded it from v.c.'s 61, 62 and 64! It has taken ten years and the publication of incorrect information before these important records have become known to me!

As a result of my note, I now have a record of *Populus nigra* from East Kent (v.c. 15). The note was well worthwhile, and will, I hope, prompt further search by members.

E. MILNE-REDHEAD, 45 Bear St, Nayland, COLCHESTER CO6 4HX.

BOOK NOTES

In the January part of *Watsonia*, Vol. **15**(1), it is hoped to include reviews of the following books:

Kew: Gardens for Science and Pleasure, edited by F.N. Hepper.
A Dictionary of Ecology, Evolution and Systematics, by R.J. Lincoln, G.A. Boxshall and P.T. Clark.
Studies on Irish Vegetation, edited by J. White.
The Complete Guide to Water Plants, by H. Muhlberg.
How to Draw Plants, by K. West.
British Red Data Books: Vascular Plants Ed. 2, by F.H. Perring and L. Farrell.
An Irish Florilegium, by W. Walsh, R.J. Ross and C. Nelson.
The Wild Flower Finder's Calendar, by D. Lang.
Guernsey's Earliest Flora, by D. McClintock.
Wakehurst Place: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, edited by F.N. Hepper.
Anatomy of the Dicotyledons ed. 2, Vol. 2, by C.R. Metcalfe and L. Chalk.
Wild Orchids in Britain and Europe, by P. & J. Davies and A. Huxley.
The Vegetative Key to Wild Flowers, by F. Rose.
The Ferns of Great Britain and Ireland, by C.N. Page.
Aquatic Macrophytes in the Lakes of Cumbria, by R.L. Stokoe.
Plants of the Balearic Island, by A. Bonner.

The following books have been received recently. Those that will NOT be reviewed in *Watsonia* are marked with an asterisk:

A checklist of the Flora of Cambridgeshire, by G. Crompton and H.L.K. Whitehouse.
Double Flowers: a Scientific Study, by J. Reynolds and J. Tampion.
Garden Trees, by R. Helliwell.
The Conservation and Development Programme for the U.K. by B. Johnson *et al.*
Man's Impact on Vegetation, edited by W. Holzner *et al.*
Flowers of the Wild: Ontario and the Great Lake Region, by Z. Zichmanis and J. Hodgins.
**Flora Malesiana*, Series I, Vol. 9(3), edited by C.G.G.J. van Steenis. Pp. 96, with 1 b & w. plate and 4 figs. Martinus Nijhoff, the Hague, etc. 1983. Price Dfl. 50.00 (ISBN 90-247-2780-4).

As well as an index to scientific plant names in Vol. 9 and Addenda, corrigenda and emendada to Vols 4-9, this latest part of *Flora Malesiana* contains a 'Dedication' to Odoarda Beccari by R.E.G. Pichi Sermolli and C.G.G.J. van Steenis, which is in fact a biography and bibliography of that famous botanist and traveller in malesia.

NORMAN K.B. ROBSON

STOP PRESS

ERRATUM

Please disregard the note concerning R.J. Pankhurst on p. 31 of *BSBI News* 33. Please read instead pp. 10 & 14 of this issue.

CONTENTS LIST

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