

IRISH BOTANICAL NEWS

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Erica mediterranea

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COMMITTEE FOR IRELAND, 1994-1995
BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF THE BRITISH ISLES

In line with the Rules, three new committee members were elected at the Annual General Meeting, held in Roundstone, Co. Galway on 8 October, 1994 (Office Bearers were subsequently elected at the first Committee Meeting). The Committee is now:

Dr Micheline J. Sheehy Skeffington, Chairman (retiring October, 1995)
Mr Paul Hackney, Secretary (retiring October, 1996)
Mr Alan Hill, Field Meetings Secretary (retiring October, 1995)
Mr John J. Earley (retiring October, 1995)
Dr Daniel L. Kelly (retiring October, 1996)
Miss Ann B. Carter (retiring October, 1997)
Miss Fiona L. MacGowan (retiring October, 1997)
Mr John Conaghan (retiring October, 1997)

The following are also members of the Committee:

Mrs Sylvia Reynolds, B.S.B.I. Council Representative
Mr Paul Corbett, Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland)
Representative
Dr C. O'Criodain, Office of Public Works, Republic of Ireland
Dr Brian S. Rushton, co-opted October, 1994

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The cover illustration shows *Erica erigena* (*E. mediterranea*) taken from Deakin, R. (1857). *Florigraphia Britannica. Volume II*. Groombridge & Sons, London.

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EDITORIAL

1995 represents an important year for Irish botany. In May, the Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin when we will play hosts to (hopefully) a large number of visitors from 'across the water' and an exciting and attractive programme has been assembled by the organising group. It was therefore rather sad to hear of the death of Professor David Webb in the autumn of 1994 – as a past President of the Society I am sure he would have thoroughly enjoyed an A.G.M. in his 'home town'. The Council is currently investigating ways in which the Society can mark David Webb's passing. One suggestion is that a future issue of *Watsonia* could contain papers with an Irish flavour – papers on Irish plants or by Irish authors and could also include some of the papers actually given at the forthcoming A.G.M. As they say, "Watch this space".

The A.G.M. should, of course, raise the profile of Irish botany and raising the profile of the Society is also exercising Council at present. We all look with envy at the likes of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The National Trust, etc. which are such large bodies that they have real political clout. But the counter argument is that quality is better than quantity! Nevertheless, we really should be doing much better in membership terms and I would hope that having the A.G.M. in Ireland with some good attendant publicity will result in some additional members joining the Society in Ireland.

It isn't just the publicity from meetings which encourages folk to join societies and one other excellent way of encouraging new members is for botany to have a higher profile generally and therefore it is a joy to report the new David Attenborough series, *The Private Life of Plants* which is being shown by the B.B.C. starting in January and almost certainly at sometime by R.T.E. Reportedly, the series cost £3 million to make and took three years and it is good to see plants receiving the same attention as animals have enjoyed over the years. Who knows how many new members we will get as a result – mental note, "Make sure we have enough application forms available"!

Have a good field season and please come to the A.G.M. in Dublin,

Dr Brian S. Rushton, Editor, *Irish Botanical News*.

BOTANY – A ROUNDSTONE VIEW

T. Robinson

Nimmo House, Roundstone, Connemara, Co. Galway

The view from Roundstone, or from Errisbeg, the hill overlooking Roundstone Bog consists mainly of heather, and so I'll restrict myself to heather. I will describe a sort of chain dance of plants and humans, interlinked by their roles in the odd history of discovery of the rare species of heather found here. This then is a cultural ecology, with comic interludes.

For the amateur like myself the identification of these rarities is tricky. Here's the trick. Hold the specimen in one hand and complete the following key:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Much the same as any other heather | 2 |
| Same but bigger | <i>Erica erigena</i> (Irish / Mediterranean Heath) |
| 2 Spelling mistake in Latin name | <i>Daboecia cantabrica</i> (St Dabeoc's Heath) |
| Veracious | 3 |
| 3 Not to hand | <i>E. ciliaris</i> (Dorset Heath) |
| Just like any old heather | <i>E. mackaiana</i> (Mackay's Heath) |

The reason you don't have *E. ciliaris* in your hand is because it's only found in one spot, which is a State secret, and it's illegal to pick it. In general, these *Ericas* are best told apart by their extreme similarity to the common sort, *E. tetralix* (Cross-leaved Heath)!

I cannot deal with their ecology, their curious Atlantic distribution, the puzzles of whether or not they show up in the pollen record since the Ice Age, or any of the sensible questions that make them endlessly fascinating to botanists. Instead, I'll tell the story in which they figure in conjunction with some human characters. I start with the tall one, *E. erigena*, which used to be called *E. mediterranea* and also *E. hibernica*. In English it is the Mediterranean Heath, though its affinities are more coastal Atlantic than Mediterranean. However, I can reveal that its real name is French Heath. At least, a shepherd here has shown me a little stream valley on the

north east of Errisbeg called French Heath Tamhnóg. A tamhnóg is a small tamhnach, a patch of cultivated or cultivable land in the middle of a bog. This patch may have been cleared as a summer milking pasture, a 'booley', in the olden days, but now it's a small forest of Mediterranean Heath, and no doubt some farmer or shepherd heard from a visitor and misremembered its name. Apparently this plant was first collected by the great Welsh Celticist and natural historian Edward Llwyd, who visited Connemara in about 1700. Then it was rediscovered here by J.T. Mackay, the director of the T.C.D. Botanical Garden, in 1830. Those pioneer botanists didn't do things by halves; Mackay sent 150 samples of it to Sir W.J. Hooker at Kew. When Robert Shuttleworth, a young English medical student acting on Mackay's behalf, came here in the following year, he collected a cartload of it. However, there was and is plenty; as Shuttleworth writes, "I found *E. mediterranea* covering a very large extent. My young guide told me that on St. Patrick's Day the whole bog was white with it". Oddly enough it did have a use, which is still remembered. A botanist called Tomlinson writing in 1910 records that "the heath had in many places been ruthlessly uprooted, and was lying about in withered heaps. He subsequently discovered that this had been done by the small farmers of the surrounding lowland in order to procure suitable bunches for potato 'Spraying' purposes, most of those concerned being too poor to purchase spraying machines".

That 'young guide' mentioned by Shuttleworth could have been Roundstone's native botanist, William McCalla, to whose grave I hope you will all make pilgrimage. My information on him is drawn from papers by Alan Eager and Maura Scannell, and by Charles Nelson. McCalla's father kept the hotel here; he was a retired veteran of the Peninsula Wars against Napoleon, a Scot, and a great drinker. Roundstone was largely a Scottish foundation. The Scots engineer Alexander Nimmo who designed the harbour here for the Fisheries Board, and planned the road system of Connemara, bought the lease of this area and sublet plots to people who would build houses along the street; he is also said to have brought in Scots fishermen and fishwives. There was soon a Presbyterian community here, and young McCalla, who was born in about 1814, was educated to be a teacher in a Presbyterian school nearby, funded by the Martins, the big landlords of Connemara. The various botanists who stayed at his father's hotel, and the interest caused by the discovery of *E. mediterranea*, may have influenced him to study botany. Soon the experts were finding him an invaluable guide and a source of specimens. Then he began making his own discoveries. Collecting litter for his cattle one day he

noticed a slightly different heather on a hillock called Na Creaga Móra, in Roundstone Bog a few kms north of the village. When Charles Babington, the Cambridge botanist, visited in 1835 McCalla took him to see *E. mediterranea*, and the next day showed him the new heather. Babington was very impressed by McCalla; he wrote that “this young man, although labouring under very great difficulties, has by his own exertions, and with an almost total want of books, obtained a very complete knowledge of the geology, mineralogy, conchology, and botany, of the neighbourhood of Roundstone”. Babington also sent samples of the heather to Mackay, who forwarded them to Hooker at Kew, saying that McCalla “promised to be a useful person in the country”. Eventually it was named *E. mackaiana* after Mackay, who one could say was indirectly responsible for its discovery through his encouragement of McCalla.

However, McCalla was not content just to be Mackay’s “useful person in the country”. He soon went to Dublin and worked under the botanist David Moore for the Ordnance Survey, but after a few months he was dismissed for giving away specimens of finds to Babington and William Thompson. That seems harsh punishment for a minor indiscretion; perhaps the naive young Connemara man had strayed into the field of some professional in-fighting.

After that he worked supplying specimens to Dr Scouler of the Royal Dublin Society, and then at Scouler’s suggestion he wrote to Hooker at Kew proposing himself as leader of a botanical expedition to New Zealand. Hooker was impressed enough to agree to pay him at the going rate of £2 per 100 species, even though his testimonials were mixed. Moore wrote that McCalla was an indefatigable collector, etc., but “he wants industry, taste, and a due sense of honourable and faithful motives. So much so that I fear he will lose many of his specimens after they were collected and statements by him will require to be received with the very greatest care”. Scouler was prepared to finance the expedition, or at least to put up the £20 fare to New Zealand and another £20 for 30 reams of paper. However, McCalla never quite got around to setting off. Scouler was annoyed to find that he had started collecting algae for sale and had caught a cold in the process. He felt that McCalla was perfectly honest and unlike his father never touched the drink – but “he is far too simple and from his ignorance of business habits apt to be imposed upon”. Scouler still hoped that “this wild man I have caught in Cunnemara” would soon be on his way – but a couple of months later McCalla was again under doctor’s orders at Malahide, having got soaking wet gathering algae.

Eventually Scouler wrote to Hooker that he had given up on McCalla, whose “incorrigible habits of procrastination and his cowardise ... have worn out my patience. He made it a point to do nothing today which could be deferred until tomorrow and to do nothing for himself while there was a chance of someone else doing for him”. McCalla candidly agreed with this assessment, acknowledged that Scouler was justified in withdrawing his patronage, thanked him, promised to repay the money he had received, and came home to Roundstone. His big adventure was over.

After that he worked on his algae, on which he was an expert, and in 1845 published the first of two volumes on the topic, which won him a silver medal. In the following year another of the rare heathers was discovered, probably on Na Creaga Beaga, the small crags, the next hummock to the west of Na Creaga Móra, the big crags, where *E. mackaiana* grew. A visiting botanist found the plant, but it was McCalla who identified it as the Dorset Heath. These were the Great Famine years; Connemara was being depopulated. Yet there were still visitors, and McCalla made a bit of a living selling them prepared specimens of the locality’s famous flora, until, in 1849, he was carried off by the cholera epidemic that followed the Famine. He was aged 35. His tomb is in the Presbyterian churchyard, up the lane to the north of the Protestant church. The chapel, the Kirk, itself was knocked down some decades ago, and McCalla’s tomb is the most notable of the few that are still traceable. But it is in danger of falling down; and it would be fitting if out of this meeting came a move to restore it.

An odd fact about *E. mackaiana* is that it was discovered in Spain just months after its discovery in Ireland. That’s an impressive victory for the theory of Morphic Resonance – you remember that some years ago this theory was propounded to explain such observations as that once a new chemical substance has been crystallised for the first time, it suddenly becomes easy for laboratories all over the world to do the same; similarly once something abstract has been thought out in one place, the same idea will strike elsewhere. This all comes about through the propagation of morphic fields, fields of pure form, through space. If you prefer something less exotic than Morphic Resonance, it would be interesting to enquire out the personal networks, interlinking with the Roundstone one I am talking about, centring on Hooker, and other big names, that disseminated specific ideas on classification, particular specifics of botanical interest and expectations, bringing the same rare plant to notice at the two ends of its range at the same time.

I skip back to the discovery of *Erica ciliaris*, the Dorset Heath. (I am basing myself here on an article by the late Professor Webb.) Everything combined to make this discovery harder and harder to credit. First, in 1839 a Mr Nash of Cork had sent out specimens of three rare heaths he said had been found in his own county. When Babington unexpectedly visited Cork and wanted to see these marvels, Mr. Nash's excuses were varied: the site for *E. ciliaris* he said had been ploughed up; that for *Daboecia cantabrica*, St Dabeoc's heath, had been burnt over; that for *E. mackaiana* had been destroyed by baryta mining. Then J.F. Bergin found the unfamiliar heather in Roundstone bog that McCalla identified as *E. ciliaris*, and later McCalla showed it to another botanist, J.H. Balfour of Edinburgh, who very briefly announced its existence in an article in *The Phytologist* in 1853. But thereafter for a long time, although several eminent botanists came to search for it, no one saw the plant, and doubts arose. So Balfour came back to try to confirm the record, and got very confused as to which bridge he had found it near, along the road across the bog north of Errisbeg. Eventually he came to the conclusion that he had identified the correct bridge, but the stream there had now been banked and the site destroyed. Subsequent writers were of the opinion that Bergin had been "the victim of an imposition" (was McCalla the suspect?) and that Balfour's specimens had been mislabelled in the Edinburgh herbarium. *E. ciliaris* was thenceforth filed among 'unverified records and missing plants'.

When David Webb was working on the distribution of *E. mackaiana* in Roundstone Bog, he kept an eye open for other things too, and became convinced that the *E. ciliaris* record was incorrect. Then in 1965 he accompanied a student, Michael Lambert, to a place where the latter had noted some "very large *E. mackaiana*" – and it turned out to be *E. ciliaris*. (The version I heard was that Webb and his students were standing in the bog, and Webb said he didn't suppose there was much chance of finding *E. ciliaris* among all these thousands of acres of heather, and one of the students said "What about this?" – pointing at their feet – and there it was, immediately identifiable, of course, by its being just the same as all the rest.) Now, there are only about five tussocks of it, covering an area the size of a table top. It is more or less where Bergin claimed to have seen it, but the site only matches Balfour's description if one assumes he was completely muddled when he mentioned a bridge nearby. Is it the same colony, that has been stumbled on three times in a century and a half? It was nearly wiped out by a fire shortly after Webb's rediscovery of it; it is

also very vulnerable to disturbance and even to the interest of professionals, who all want just a little sprig of it. A local naturalist has told me that to ensure its survival he has taken bits and planted them on various islands: I think he is lying, but future finds of it might be suspect, and so might the present known station. Did McCalla have access to specimens of *E. ciliaris*? Might he have been tempted to use them to renew his flagging career? A libellous suggestion about Roundstone's native son! Roundstone Bog has been repeatedly traversed by experts engaged in mapping the distribution of *E. mackaiana*, and no other *E. ciliaris* sites have ever come to light. The one known station is close to the road, which looks suspicious. On the other hand if it were not close to the road it would most likely never have been seen.

Botanists will not reveal this location to the casually curious. I had to persuade a botanist – we'll call her Erica – to show me the site, which she would only do on condition I was blindfolded. So off we went in her all-terrain vehicle for hour after hour, driving round and round, me bouncing around in the back with the Kalashnikovs and machetes; I don't know where we went, but three times I smelled Guinness and fish and chips. Then we walked round and round in the bog for hours. Eventually she said "This is it!" I was very moved. I can't describe the plant, since the blindfold was not removed; but, to trip over, it feels subtly the same as any other heather.

Meanwhile mapping the exact distribution of *E. mackaiana* continues to attract a lot of effort; I'm not sure why. Praeger, David Webb, Maura Scannell and David McClintock, Charles Nelson and several others, have added to the sum of knowledge on the question; now Micheline Sheehy Skeffington has just shown me the latest distribution map of it in Roundstone Bog, from Errisbeg to the edge of Clifden, compiled by her student Liereke van Doorslaer. The original site was on the bog road about halfway from Roundstone to Clifden, and the known range has gradually been extended both north and south of the bog road. This has led to it becoming the best known and most controversial plant in the history of Connemara since, say, the potato. Partly because of these rare heathers, the area of lowland blanket bog south of the bog road has long been designated an Area of Scientific Interest (A.S.I.). Then in 1987 the A.S.I. was extended to take in an area of bog – the same bog – north of the bog road. This was done by the scientists of the Office of Public Works' Wildlife Service. Unfortunately the O.P.W. bureaucrats then left the redrawn maps sitting in their out trays until January 1989, and did not

even inform the County Council. They excused themselves later on by saying that they were short of staff and the index to the maps wasn't ready. Unfortunately in that period some businessmen of Clifden decided the town needed an airport, and that the ideal site was on the corner of the bog nearest to Clifden. Three months after they had applied for planning permission and when their scheme seemed to be well airborne and had gathered enthusiastic local support, it was discovered that the airport site was within the new bounds of the A.S.I. Of course, A.S.I.s as such had no legal standing, but the Council tended to adopt them into the County Plan, and European funding was being sought, so in practice the A.S.I. designation grounded the scheme. A mighty row broke out; single handedly the O.P.W. by its inefficiency had created an anti-environmentalist backlash in Connemara. For us local environmental activists it was a difficult time; we cursed the O.P.W. but had to fight their battle for them to preserve the bog from this intrusion. After a judicial review, which the Clifden businessmen quite deservedly won, the whole A.S.I. system has been declared unconstitutional, and is now being replaced by a new sort of designation. The airport company, of course, had to commission an Environmental Impact Report. The bit of bog in question was examined by botanists and zoologists and other sorts of -ists from R.E.M.U. in Cork, and lo and behold R.E.M.U.'s conclusion was that in general this was an uninteresting corner of the bog, whose loss would not be of significance. The R.E.M.U. botanist did not notice any *E. mackaiana* on the site, although the nearest known station at that time was only a few hundred metres away but the Connemara National Park personnel looked over the site as well, and found hectares of *E. mackaiana*, together with its hybrid with *E. tetralix*. The Environmental Impact Report therefore ended up with this embarrassed mention of the plant: "This heather, including its hybrid *E. stuartii* and St Dabeoc's heath were identified by O.P.W. personnel and validated by R.E.M.U. personnel ...". Perhaps it was R.E.M.U. who were the more in need of validation. Of course then *E. mackaiana* became a pawn in the arguments for and against the airport – not an easy argument to conduct on our side, for the airport lobby quickly grasped the essential scientific fact about the stuff, that it's indistinguishable from ordinary heather. It certainly didn't obviously count as interesting 'wildlife'. As one woman said to me, "If the Wildlife Service is so keen on the place why don't they buy it and put some wildlife on it?" Wildlife is zebras and elephants, not heather. Another airport supporter used to perform at the public meetings they held in all the villages; he would wave two bits of heather to prove that *E. mackaiana* grew all over the mountain behind his own house kilometres away at

Letterfrack. This ridiculous plant it seemed was standing in the way of progress. A poem was written about it in the local paper; I'll give you a few lines from it:

BOTANICAL PRISONER

Now the voice of Bureaucracy thunders yonder, I
have set a boundary to the nation,
I don't cherish my children equally.
The prognostic perception of Parnell and Pearse perishes,
Homo sapiens has a captive audience
A prisoner of *Erica mackaiana*.

The airport scheme did not get planning permission, and I can tell you, *E. mackaiana* wasn't Connemara's favourite plant; it became the symbol of obscurantist and incomprehensible intellectuals and especially of 'self-appointed experts' with funny foreign names like Matthias van Schouten, who were denying Connemara its place in the twentieth century and wanted it to be depopulated by emigration and overgrown with heather. I think though *E. mackaiana* will never again bloom as it did that summer. The high point was its appearance at the annual Clifden fancy dress ball: the prize for the best costume went to someone dressed as *E. mackaiana*.

That concludes this Roundstone set-dance of human beings and heathers. In the last figure, a human takes the appearance of a heather which already bears a human's name.

(Editor's note – at the request of Tim Robinson, the informality of the original talk has been preserved in this transcript.)

A REPORT ON THE FLORA OF CO. CORK (V.CC. H3-H5), 1994

T. O'Mahony
6 Glenthorn Way, Dublin Hill, Cork City

During 1994, numerous field trips were undertaken within the county, and I was accompanied on some of these by Michael Troy, to whom I express my thanks. A particular effort was made to establish the distributional ranges of some of the rarer native taxa. As usual, only the more notable finds are included in the present Report.

On the 8 January, accompanied by M. Troy, two nearby West Cork populations of *Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern) were examined. Of the eight populations present at Leap (H3, W/2.3) only the largest and most luxuriant clump was fertile. However, the magnificent population at Castletownsend (H3, W/1.3) proved highly fertile, while the colour contrast between the blackish-green, seaweed-like, spent 1993 fronds, and the lettuce-green, immature 1994 fronds, was very striking and beautiful.

In mid-April, work on the River Bandon near Enniskean, showed the beautiful *Claytonia sibirica* (Pink Purslane) to be well-established at Desert Bridge (H3, W/38.54) and Manch Bridge (H3, W/29.52). I also rechecked the only known previous Cork site, from the northern shore of Curraghally Lake (H3, W/2.4) where it was found by the late Emmet O'Donovan in 1954. However, the species was not seen here, in what appears to be a most unsuitable habitat.

On 30 April, a trip to Rock Island, near Goleen (H3, V/8.2) resulted in the finding of two large *Tuberaria guttata* (Spotted Rock-rose) populations on rock outcrops immediately north of the Crookhaven/Rock Island road junction. Otherwise, the season here was almost a fortnight behind schedule, with only *Orchis morio* (Green-winged Orchid) in full flower and occurring commonly throughout this area.

In early May, *Carex strigosa* (Thin-spiked Wood-Sedge) was found in two new stations of the River Awbeg, at Shanballymore (H5, R/67.06) and Rockgrove (H5, R/68.04). Both stations are down river of the original (c. 1870) site at Doneraile. Moreover, further work on the River Blackwater showed *C. strigosa* to also occur at Clondulane (H5, W/85.99) below Fermoy, and opposite Convamore (H5, W/71.98). This very local Cork sedge is now known to occur over c. 23 km of the River Blackwater, where it frequents relict patches of swamp-woodland.

On 23 May, many plants of the rare sedge hybrid, *Carex divulsa* (Grey Sedge) x *C. muricata* (Prickly Sedge) were found on a limestone outcrop at Shanbally, Cork Harbour (H4, W/75.64). Unlike the four previous Cork sites for this hybrid, neither parent was seen with it on the outcrop, though *C. divulsa* is common in this general area. (Fruiting material was collected in late September.) The nearby Lough More Strand (H4, W/79.63) population of *Lepidium latifolium* (Dittander), which I first found in 1972, was seen to be flourishing. This is the only extant H4 site.

Also in May, the sedge hybrid, *Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge) x *C. remota* (Remote Sedge) was found in a relict swamp-wood habitat near the North Bride River, below Bridebridge (H5, W/85.91). It is new to East Cork.

In June, *Geranium rotundifolium* (Round-leaved Crane's-bill) was rechecked in its two adjacent West Cork stations near Timoleague Abbey (H3, W/4.4), where I originally recorded it in 1970. Similarly, the only present-known West Cork station for the sedge hybrid, *Carex otrubae* (False Fox-sedge) x *C. remota* (Remote Sedge) was rechecked at Broad Strand (H3, W/51.41), where I first found it in 1983. Most regrettably, the long-standing population of *Crambe maritima* (Sea-kale), which was known from here since the 1960s, had been bulldozed out of existence following a major storm in 1989! I had shown this population to the late D.A. Webb in 1971. Thankfully, the beautiful *Tragopogon porrifolius* (Salsify) which we also saw, still occurs on a bank beside the beach carpark.

Also, in June, *Trifolium striatum* (Knotted Clover) was seen in flower on the beautiful limestone outcrops at Waterpark Castle, Carrigaline (H4, W/73.62). I had not visited the site since my original discovery in 1976. Common calcicoles here included: *Clinopodium ascendens* (Common Calamint), *Geranium rotundifolium* (Round-leaved Crane's-bill) and *Foeniculum vulgare* (Fennel). Housing development in this area within the last 20 years, now restricts access to much of this botanically rich and beautiful limestone.

In July, random checks were made on the Cork populations of the hybrid maritime grass, *Elytrigia atherica* (Sea Couch) x *E. juncea* (Sand Couch) which occupies a vast stretch of coastline from Weaver's Point, Cork Harbour (H4, W/80.60) westwards to Owenahincha (H3, W/3.3), at least.

Also in July, the rose hybrid, *Rosa canina* (Common Dog-rose) x *R. tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose) was confirmed to occur sparsely along c. 43 km of the River Blackwater valley, from Millstreet railway-crossing (H4, W/28.92) eastwards to near Ballyhooly (H5, W/70.98). Moreover, populations of *Rosa micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar) displaying introgression from *R. rubiginosa* (Common Sweet-briar) (i.e. the presence of acicles/glandular-setae on parts of the inflorescence-branches) proved locally frequent in the Killavullen-Doneraile area of East Cork, where it is

present in at least four 10-km squares. I first recorded *R. micrantha* x *R. rubiginosa* from H5 in 1976. Unfortunately, as with many other Cork Rose hybrids, this has also been omitted from the Graham & Primavesi (1993) monograph (Graham, G.G. & Primavesi, A.L. (1993). *Roses of Great Britain and Ireland*. B.S.B.I. Handbook No.7. Botanical Society of the British Isles, London) who astonishingly omitted any reference to the records in Scannell & Synnott (1987) (Scannell, M.J.P. & Synnott, D.M. (1987). *Census catalogue of the flora of Ireland*. The Stationery Office, Dublin).

In early August, *Hordeum secalinum* (Meadow Barley) was reinstated to the Cork flora (after an absence of c. 90 years), when I discovered it growing in some abundance in an inundation-meadow beside the Curraheen River, Cork City (H4, W/63.71). On 15 August, *Mentha* x *gracilis* (Bushy Mint) was found to be well-established on the River Sullane and its tributary the Sullane Beg, near Macroom (H3, W/25.74). This lovely mint now has an enormously wide distribution in Co. Cork, occurring over large stretches of the rivers Blackwater, Lee, Bandon, North Bride and Araglin, etc. (pers. obs. 1970-1994).

Also in August, *Galium mollugo* (Hedge Bedstraw) was found near Macroom (H3, W/2.7) by James O'Malley, and beside the Curraheen River (H4, W/63.71) by myself. It is new to both vice-counties. *Epilobium tetragonum* (Square-stemmed Willowherb) was also found in a few new sites in H4/H5. Its occurrence near Youghal (H5, X/07.75) suggests that it has now covered the entire c. 48 km length of the defunct Cork-Youghal Railway Line. It has also spread very locally to road-margins in this area.

Finally in late-August, Michael and Roger Troy re-found *Equisetum hyemale* (Rough Horsetail) in its Gearagh station on the River Lee (H3, W/29.69). This is the only known extant Cork site for this horsetail. On 15 September, M. Troy showed me this station. While *E. hyemale* may occur elsewhere in the Gearagh, our observations suggested that it is confined to just one of the numerous islets here. However, this islet population is thriving and luxuriant and covers at least 300 m of the margin – a most satisfying and memorable sight! A single clump was brought into cultivation.

A REPORT OF THE FLORA OF FERMANAGH (V.C. H33), 1994

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Ralph Forbes and I continue to work towards a *Flora of Fermanagh* using the Recorder database. The database now contains in excess of 120,000 records including all the published records that we can track down and almost all of Meikle, Moon and Carrothers' records from the period 1946-1953.

Work has continued in the field visiting new sites, checking old records and assessing the current status of interesting species.

A few of the more interesting finds were:

- a. Up to 100 shrubs of *Rhamnus cathartica* (Buckthorn) on Heron Island in Lower Lough Erne together with a monstrous form of *Phyllitis scolopendrium* (Hart's-tongue) with forked ends to its fronds.
- b. *Vicia sylvatica* (Wood Vetch) on Bess Island in abundance, last seen here in 1892. *Hieracium umbellatum* (Hawkweed) was also present on this island.
- c. Over 50 spikes of *Neotinea maculata* in flower on Knockninny; Raymond Piper pointed out to me that they all appeared to be the pink-tinged form. We also found three plants of *Pseudorchis albida* (Small-white Orchid) at this site which had not been noted before.
- d. *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* (Irish Lady's-tresses) was in perfect flower when Ralph Forbes and I visited Corraslough Point on 15 August; we saw six flowering spikes.
- e. *Saxifraga aizoides* (Yellow Saxifrage) is fairly abundant on the western section of the cliff south of Lower Lough Erne.
- f. *Oreopteris limbosperma* (Lemon-scented Fern) turned up by a stream in the north of the county.

I have been trying to assess the status of *Orthilia secunda* (Serrated

Wintergreen) in Fermanagh. With the aid of Praeger's description of the Correl Glen site published in the *Irish Naturalist* **XII**: 246 (1903), Hannah Northridge and I found what is probably Tetley's original 1901 site. A couple of metres away grows the gametophyte of *Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern). Apart from the Correl Glen site, *O. secunda* grows, occasionally abundantly, on at least seven of the north-facing scarps in the Lough Navar Forest area.

Would anyone who has seen, or knows anyone who has seen, *O. secunda* in Cos Derry or Antrim please get in touch with me?

THE URBAN FLORA OF BELFAST

S. Beesley

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I reported last year that recording had started for a proposed *Urban Flora of Belfast*. Recording has continued this year and progress has been most satisfactory. Some members of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club have enthusiastically supported the project with John Wilde's contribution being outstanding.

All 1994 recording cards have not yet been returned but recording has been carried out in all 75 1-km squares chosen for the survey. Some idea of the progress made in the two years (1993/4) can be judged from the following statistics:

1-km squares recorded: 75
Record cards completed: 194
Total records: 16424
Average no. species per 1-km square: 151
Total no. of species recorded: 563

The total number of species recorded in the survey at 563 is far greater than expected and shows what can be found by a comprehensive and detailed survey. Comments on some notable species are given below:

Aethusa cynapium (Fool's Parsley). FNE (Hackney, P. ed. (1992). *Flora of the north-east of Ireland*. The Queen's University, Belfast.)

reports “seen only a few times since 1920” but recorded from seven sites in the present survey.

Anisantha sterilis (Barren Brome) has been recorded from eight sites.

Carex hirta (Hairy Sedge) is by no means rare but in an urban survey recording from 58 sites was not expected. Similarly *Isolepis setacea* (Bristle Club-rush) was recorded from 27 sites mostly waste ground. Both these species could have been overlooked by some recorders.

Centaureum erythraea (Common Centaury) is not normally considered to be a plant of urban areas but records have been made at twelve sites.

Chrysanthemum segetum (Corn Marigold) is a declining arable weed but was found in four sites. Similarly *Papaver rhoeas* (Common Poppy), reported in FNE as “now very rare generally”, was found at five sites.

Cochlearia danica (Danish Scurvy-grass) has recently become established on edges of the M2 Motorway and has now spread to other roads in Belfast and was found in five sites.

Epipactis helleborine (Broad-leaved Helleborine) would not normally be expected from urban areas but was reported from 17 sites. In some areas it grows through asphalt pavements!

Conyza canadensis (Canadian Fleabane) was first recorded from N.E. Ireland in Belfast in 1990. In the latest survey five sites have been found.

Hordeum murinum (Wall Barley) was considered in FNE to be “very rare” but has been found in eight sites.

Impatiens glandulifera (Indian Balsam) is frequent and well-established around rivers and lakes but in the present survey it has been recorded from 49 sites including many waste ground sites often not obviously wet.

Lepidium ruderae (Narrow-leaved Pepperwort). FNE gives only two post

1990 records but it is frequent in some parts of Belfast and eight sites have been reported.

Solanum dulcamara (Bittersweet) was found to be far more frequent than expected from urban areas and 104 sites were recorded.

Single records have been reported for the following uncommon species:

Filago vulgaris (Common Cudweed)

Cichorium intybus (Chicory)

Inula helenium (Elecampane)

Melilotus alba (White Melilot)

Trifolium strictum (Upright Clover)

Spergularia rubra (Sand Spurrey)

Solanum nigrum (Black Nightshade)

Apium graveolens (Wild Celery)

Recording for the project is now almost complete and limited recording will take place in 1995 to fill in under-recorded areas and in particular to cover early season species.

VICE-COUNTY RECORDER NEWS

P. Hackney

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There have been some recent changes in vice-county recorders. Don Cotton takes over responsibility for Leitrim (H29) from Daniel Kelly and Noel McGough while Dr J.G.D. Lamb has indicated a desire to step down from his responsibility for Offaly (H18) – our thanks to all three resigning recorders for their work and commitment over the years. Meanwhile the Committee for Ireland would like to hear from any member who would care to take over from Dr Lamb in Offaly.

The responsibilities of a vice-county recorder are basically to act as the central reference for records of vascular plants for the vice-county. It is a principal requirement that they should maintain accurate records in the form of a card index or on a computer database which can be passed on to their successor in due course. Ideally they should live in or near the

vice-county for which they are responsible. Acting as a vice-county recorder is a long-term commitment: most perform the job for many years, and it requires a methodical approach to the keeping of plant records.

Most recorders are among the most active of the field botanists in their vice-counties, but it is not essential that a recorder out-perform his fellow botanists in field recording – his/her main task is to collate the data and ensure they are accessible and secure. Organising or encouraging field recording by others is also a task generally undertaken by recorders in their vice-counties. The new Atlas scheme, although organised centrally in B.S.B.I., will probably encourage most recorders to mobilise any botanical assistance they can muster since it is virtually impossible to cover adequately any vice-county alone. In some cases joint recorderships operate with two persons sharing the work.

If any member would like to volunteer to act as vice-county recorder in Offaly or would care to volunteer help in any other vice-county, please contact me. Remember, too, that you do not have to be a taxonomic whizz-kid to act as an efficient recorder!

(Paul Hackney can be contacted on telephone 01960 382239.)

ATLAS 2000 – AN OPINION

Micheline Sheehy Skeffington
Botany Department, University College, Galway

Vice-county recorders will have received a notice (*Recorders' Newsletter*, April, 1994) from David McCosh giving details as to how members can contribute to the update of the *Atlas of the British flora*.

In Ireland the scheme probably involves re-doing many of the squares as very few people took part in the original survey for the *Atlas* and it was also done on the British grid system, whereas we now use the Irish grid. Depending on the vice-county, there will have been a little and in some cases considerable, recording since the original survey, but in many others this is by no means the case – my own included.

I would just like to add a personal comment at this point and maybe elicit a response somewhere within B.S.B.I. Ireland. I feel that due a. to the relatively low number of botanists in Ireland and b. to the lack of complete data on most aspects of the Irish flora, we can make use of this scheme to collect other information, i.e. we should be recording on a site related and not a square related basis. This is probably what all of you are doing already, but maybe it is worth saying at this stage.

An extreme example of this would be to record only from within rare or unusual habitats within a vice-county. With a little care, this could still be related to 10-km squares, by using a different card should the habitat (inevitably!) span two or more squares. Thus details of the habitat, its condition and a species list would be available for future reference.

A simpler option, which is probably the minimum which people do already, is to record systematically for each square, but to do it again on a site (habitat) related basis. Everyone can tell a wet meadow from a wood and a river from a bog, it is simply a matter of using a separate card for each different site/recognisable habitat. This would require a bit more work, changing cards for each change in habitat, but might encourage one habitat to be thoroughly worked instead of operating on a 'straight' line basis, i.e. following a path through a wood, along a river and out into a pasture, recording all along the way. There will inevitably be problems with more subtle changes in habitat, but for the most part, the information could still be used for other purposes, as well as supplying records for the *Atlas*. The *Atlas*, at the end of the day, only requires a master card for each 10-km square. It is up to us how much other data we wish to collect per vice-county.

Records, of course, should be published if they are new and this will put the work into the public domain without any danger of it being 'used' e.g. on a commercial basis.

A response after the next season in the field would be of interest.

RECORDS OF THE GENUS *CAMELINA* CRANTZ (CRUCIFERAE) IN IRELAND

T.C.G. Rich

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Camelina species were once occasional weeds of flax and grain fields in Ireland, but are now rarely seen. The genus is somewhat critical, and most records have usually been referred to '*C. sativa*' (e.g. Scannell & Synnott 1987) the only taxon given in most Irish or British Floras. Recent work in eastern Europe (Smejkal 1971; Mirek 1981) has clarified many of the problems, and the Irish records were reassessed during work for my B.S.B.I. *Crucifer Handbook* (Rich 1991). The purpose of this note is to document the critically determined *Camelina* records in Ireland.

The taxa are defined here following the B.S.B.I. *Crucifer Handbook* (Rich 1991). Difficulty has been found applying Mirek's (1981) infraspecific classification to *C. microcarpa* and to *C. sativa* s.s. and the records are here only identified to species. Material has been examined in **BEL, BM, DBN, E, GLAM, K** and **TCD** and records have been abstracted from the literature. Records unsupported by herbarium specimens are treated as *C. sativa* s.l. as it is unclear if the names used in the last century correlate with modern taxa. The following specimens have been critically determined:

CAMELINA RUMELICA VELEN.

H4/H5 Cork. Cork City, rubbish heap, 19 June 1891, R.W. Scully (with *C. sativa* s.s.) (**DBN**; see also Scully (1895)). This is the first record for Ireland and predates the three known British records.

CAMELINA MICROCARPA ANDRZ.

H19 Kildare. Straffan, yard of vacant cottage, July 1905, Miss M.C. Knowles (**DBN**; collected with material which is probably *C. sativa* but is indeterminate; see also Knowles (1906)). H21 Dublin. Howth, 1881, H.C. Hart (**DBN**; assumed to be the '*C. sativa*' record from waste ground, Warren House; Hart (1887), Colgan (1904)). H31 Louth. Baltray, sandy ground near gateway, 4 June 1984, D. Doogue *et al.* (**DBN**). There is a specimen in **TCD** from H21 Dublin, North Bull, near club house, 14 June

1946, C. Pearson which is probably referable to this species but is immature.

CAMELINA SATIVA (L.) CRANTZ S.S.

H4/H5 Cork. Cork City, rubbish heap by River Lee, 19 June 1891, R.W. Scully (**DBN**; see also Scully (1895); Holland (1918) found that *Camelina* had persisted for at least 22 years at this site). H8 Limerick. Field near Castleconnell, 1804, J.T. Mackay (**DBN**). Edges of harbour road, Foynes, 20 July 1988, Mrs S. Reynolds (**DBN**; Reynolds (1990)), and recorded three times on roadsides between Foynes and Limerick in 1989 (Reynolds 1992). H12 Wexford. Among flax, Ballyconiger (locality not traced), 8 May 1850, I. Carroll (**DBN**, **BM**; see also Moore & More (1866)). H16 W. Galway. Flax fields, Renvyle, July 1832, R.J. Shuttleworth (**DBN**). Connemara, not among corn, November 1833, J.T. Mackay (**DBN**). Galway, August 1853, T. Kirk (**LIV**). Near Galway, 7 August 1858, J.H. Balfour (**E**). H20 Wicklow. Fassaroe, 1876, R.M. Barrington (**DBN**; see also MacAlister & McNab (1878); Bruner (1950)). H21 Dublin. North Bull Island, 1 July 1965, G.J. Sheehan (**DBN**). H26/H27 Mayo. Undated, probably around 1800, A.B. Lambert (**K**). H33 Fermanagh. Waste ground, Enniskillen, 14 July 1953, J.McK. Moon (**BEL**). H38 Down. Flax fields, Orlock Point near Groomsport, 24 June 1878, T.H. Corry and S.A. Stewart (**BEL**, **DBN** – the specimens are assumed to belong to the same collection). H39 Antrim. Antrim, 17 July 1918, S.A. Bennett & W.R. Megaw (**BEL**).

CAMELINA ALYSSUM (MILL.) THELL. SUBSP. *INTEGERRIMA* (CELAKE) SMEJKAL

H8 Limerick. Field, Castleconnell, 1804, J.T. Mackay (**DBN**). H38 Down. Newtownards, July 1878, E.F. Linton (**DBN**; the date of this record is given as 1871 (as "*C. sativa*") by Stewart & Praeger (1895), and on a specimen in **BM**).

In addition, there are specimens in **BEL** for H39 Antrim from cultivated fields, Cushenden, August 1869 and August 1872, S.A. Brenan (see also Stewart & Corry (1888)) labelled "*C. foetida*" which are probably referable to this species. Another record for Ballymoney, 1984, I. McNeill (Hackney 1992) is also given for this taxon.

No wild material of *C. alyssum* (Mill.) Thell. subsp. *alyssum* has been

seen, but there is a specimen in **DBN** grown from Customs seed samples and it may have also occurred. It is easily distinguished from the other species by the typically pinnately-lobed lower leaves.

'*CAMELINA SATIVA*' SENSU LATO

All other records traced cannot be referred to a species as they either lack ripe fruit or voucher specimens, and are best treated as *C. sativa* sensu lato. These records are: H1 S. Kerry. Dingle, July 1841, C.C. Babington (this specimen may be *C. alyssum*; **GLAM**). H3/H4/H5 Cork. "in flax fields in all parts of the county ... common" (Power 1845). H9 Clare. Kilrush dock, 16 April 1930, R.A. Phillips (**DBN**). H16 W. Galway. Borders of Lough Corrib, Oughterard, W. Wade (Wade 1804). H20 Wicklow. Outside the goods yard, Rathdrum Station, 1937, J.P. Brunker (Brunker 1950). H21 Dublin. Ringsend, Dublin, June 1906, R.M. Lamb (**DBN**). Waste ground, Sydney Parade, Dublin, 11 June 1935, Dr Bewley (**DBN**). Kilmainham Lane, Dublin, 1946, Mrs A.L.K. King, and Kimmage Dump, 1948, D.N.F.C. (these two latter records were annotated by Mrs King in a copy of Colgan's *Supplement to the Flora of County Dublin*; pers. comm. M.J.P. Scannell). H23 Westmeath. Knockdrin, 1894, H.C. Levinge (Moore & More 1866). H26/H27 Mayo. Foxford, 1864, A.G. More (Baker & Foggitt 1865). H31 Louth. About Collon (Bailey 1833). H38 Down. Orlock Point, Groomsport, R.P. Vowell (**DBN**). Castlereagh (Dickie 1864). Ballyholme, T.H. Corry (Stewart & Corry 1888). Victoria Park, rubbish tip, C.D. Chase (Chase 1927). H38/H39 Down, Antrim. Fields about Belfast (Dickie 1864). H39 Antrim. Field at Malone, 1799, J. Templeton (Stewart & Corry 1888). Flax fields about Ballinleg (Bailey 1833). Ballycastle (assumed to be Antrim) (Dickie 1864). Trooper's Lane, T.H. Corry; and about Antrim (Stewart & Corry 1888). Cushenden, August 1872, S.A. Brennan (**BEL**). Cushenden, 19 July 1886, R.Ll. Praeger (**DBN**). Flax fields, Broughshane, J. Grainger; and Larne, Curran, R.Ll. Praeger (Stewart & Praeger 1895). H40 Londonderry. Magilligan, D. Moore (**DBN**). Errigal Banks, 18 July 1893, R. Ll. Praeger (**BM**). Flax fields near Garvagh, 18 July 1894, Miss M.C. Knowles (**DBN, TCD**).

DISCUSSION

Camelina seeds appear to have had several modes of introduction. Adams (1909a, b) recorded that it was introduced with flax seed from Holland and Russia, and with animal feed. Brunker (1940) recorded it introduced with barley from Chile and California. Reynolds (1990) also reported it

introduced at ports, possibly also with animal food.

Given that *Camelina* is a characteristic weed of flax crops (Hjelmqvist 1950), the frequency of records might be expected to correlate with the areas of flax grown for the Irish linen industry. Unfortunately, the paucity of records and their inconsistent, fragmentary nature does not allow an analysis in this case. Only seven of the 50 records traced state specifically that the plants were growing in with flax; 15 are from other habitats and the remainder are too vague (e.g. “fields”) or give no habitat information. Furthermore, the frequency of surviving records may not reflect the true frequency of the plants. Mackay (1825) describes *Camelina* as “frequent in fields of flax” and later as “occasional among flax” (Mackay 1836), Power (1845) as “in flax fields ... common”, and Moore & More (1866) as “frequently found ... among flax”, yet there are only six dated records between 1800 and 1866.

The decrease in frequency of *Camelina* as a casual in Ireland is probably due to the cleaner seed imports, use of selective herbicides and the decline of the linen industry. However, specimens are still occasionally recorded in docks and waste ground, and may also occur in tips, fields and roadsides, and in towns and cities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to the keepers of the herbaria for access to the collections, to Kew for access to the library, and to Jane Croft, Paul Hackney, Eimear Nic Lughadha, Chris Preston, Sylvia Reynolds and Maura Scannell for their help.

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IRISH GENETIC RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST

C. Spillane
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In March, 1994 an Irish Genetic Resources Conservation Trust (I.G.R.C.T.) was established to promote the conservation of rare and threatened plant and animal species, breeds and varieties.

The Trust seeks to achieve these aims through establishing specific practical conservation projects with clear objectives. One project that may be of particular interest to B.S.B.I. members is the I.G.R.C.T. Red Data Book Seedbank Project. In July the I.G.R.C.T. received funding from the National Heritage Council to establish a seedbank of ecotypes of rare and threatened native wild plant species. As a result two botanists (Aileen O'Sullivan and Jim Martin) are carrying out the collection, storage and preliminary characterisation of seed from 36 rare and threatened plant species selected from the 159 species listed in the *Irish Red Data Book: Vascular plants* (Curtis, T.G.F. & McGough, N. (1988). *Irish Red Data Book: Vascular plants*. The Stationery Office, Dublin). Starting late in the season they have been successful in collecting seed from ecotypes of 14 species (e.g. *Asparagus officinalis* subsp. *prostratus* (Wild Asparagus), *Avena strigosa* (Bristle Oat), *Hordeum secalinum* (Meadow Barley), *Crambe maritima* (Sea-kale), etc.) at 19 different sites around Ireland. Their most recent collecting mission was on the Aran Islands where they made collections of Irish rye ecotypes and its associated weed flora. Two of the Trust's directors have been closely involved in establishing this project, Tom Curtis, of the Wildlife Service of the Office of Public Works, and Stephen Waldren, Director of the Trinity College Botanic Gardens at Dartry, Dublin. The second phase of the project will involve the

preliminary characterisation of the collected ecotypes with Donal Synnott at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin. The Trust also has other projects underway such as the promotion of the establishment of a Reference Collection of Irish Apple Varieties in conjunction with Anita Hayes of the Irish Seed Savers Association and also the establishment of a conservation breeding strategy for a native breed of sheep, Galway sheep, which are currently in danger of extinction.

If anyone is interested in joining the Trust (IR£10 waged or IR£5 unwaged membership) or becoming practically involved in its activities they should contact:

Charlie Spillane, Honorary Secretary, 52 Crampton Buildings, Temple Bar, Dublin 2; telephone 01-6774052; E-mail: cspillne@mail.tcd.ie.

BOOK REVIEWS

The South Wexford Coast. J. Hurley. Pp. 18 + viii. S.W.C. Promotions, Grange, Kilmore, Co. Wexford. 1994. Price IR£1.00, including postage and packing – discounts available for multiple copies (ISBN 0 9522796 0 6).

At the Annual General Meeting of the Irish Branch of the B.S.B.I. in October, 1993 Jim Hurley gave a paper on the importance of the South Wexford coast as a natural heritage resource and his views were subsequently published in *Irish Botanical News* (No 4, pages 10-13). Jim has now produced this small booklet, sponsored by Telecom Eireann, as “a celebration in words and in pictures of the natural riches of the South Wexford coast”. And, indeed, it is that.

Copiously illustrated with high quality photographs, the booklet takes us on a tour starting with Hook Head in the west through to Lady’s Island Lake in the east and passing through twelve other places of interest along the way. Each site, all of which are Natural Heritage Areas and ten of which are rated as of international importance, gets one page in which it is described in detail and the nature conservation interest and conservation status/protection status outlined. It thus acts as a superb guide to the area as well as summarising the results of many years of painstaking work. The central pages contain ‘comments’ in which Jim has tried to muster quotations from a wide range of naturalists, scientists, conservation

organisation agencies, etc. to support his case for the protection of this most wonderful part of Ireland. The inside back cover contains a detailed map of the different areas and an extremely useful summary table giving the different conservation/protection status of each of the 14 sites. And just in case you felt that the publication of such a booklet will encourage more visitors, Jim carefully places the Country Code on the back cover together with a number of useful contact points.

I really cannot praise this booklet too highly. It shows what can be achieved by enthusiastic workers and it should prove to be a model for other areas of Ireland, both north and south.

Let me finish with one of the quotations from the 'comments' in the booklet – from Mr Noel Dempsey, T.D., Government Chief Whip and Minister of State at the Department of Finance:

“The National Parks and Wildlife Service of my Department is appreciative of the great scientific value of the South Wexford coast. The aim of the Service would be to foster a strong cooperative link between conservation and other interests within the region, which would help secure this invaluable natural heritage resource for present and future generations while providing for continued suitable use for the benefit of residents and visitors.”

The publication of this booklet will ensure that that ideal will come several steps closer.

B.S. RUSHTON

National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin: a souvenir guide. Pp. 30. National Botanic Gardens, The Office of Public Works, Glasnevin, Dublin 9. 1994. Price IR£2.50 (IR£3.08 including postage and packing) (ISBN 0 7076 040 2 8).

It is a joy to have received two splendid booklets for review in this issue of *Irish Botanical News* and this is equally a match for the booklet reviewed above. There are guide books and there are guide books. This one is clearly in the category of a souvenir rather than a detailed appraisal of all the various plantings within the confines of Glasnevin. Nevertheless, it contains considerable detail and copious, good quality illustrations. The

centre pages contain a plan of the grounds (to be contrasted with the very first map of the Gardens in 1880 reproduced on an earlier page) with the major areas marked and the basic meteorological, topographic and soil data provided. This is then supported by short essays on the main planting forms within the Garden – Shrubs, Trees (the tremendous *Cedrus atlantica* ‘Pendula’, which so dominates part of the Gardens gets a special mention as does the Yew Walk – pictured both in 1900 and 1980), Glasshouse Collections (of palms, ferns, aquatic plants and orchids), Native Plants and Herbaceous Plants (in perennial borders, bulbs, the family beds so loved by generations of botany students, etc.). This is then interwoven with details of the history of the Gardens and its architectural features as well as the work of the Herbarium and Library. The efforts being undertaken by the Gardens in conserving the native and non-native flora is also given prominence – did you know, for example, that the cycad collection is of international importance and includes an African species which is now extinct in the wild. There is also an interesting section on the plant-hunters and garden plants specifically associated with Glasnevin. And this is illustrated throughout with both recent, brilliantly colourful photographs and older black and white prints and woodcuts – I loved the photograph of the silver trowel that was used to lay the foundation stone of the gate-lodges in 1815!

A well-produced, readable booklet, useful as a reminder of the Gardens but also as a source material in its own right. Exceptional value at IR£2.50.

B.S. RUSHTON

BOOK NEWS

Marine algae of Northern Ireland. O. Morton. Pp. 148 + vii, 15 colour plates, one black and white plate, three maps. Ulster Museum, Belfast. 1995. Price £6.95, including postage and packing (ISBN 0 900761 28 8).

Osborne Morton is the curator in the Ulster Museum responsible for the algae and lichens in the Herbarium. His book is a compendium of all the marine records of Chlorophyta, Phaeophyta and Rhodophyta of Northern Ireland and thus provides a comprehensive and up-to-date account of their distribution.