

Sussex Botanical Recording Society

Newsletter

No. 55

January 2003

President's Message

By Mary Briggs

Good wishes to you all for 2003!

The achievement in the botanical world of the British Isles in 2002 was the publication of the *New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora*, edited by C. D. Preston, D. A. Pearman and T. D. Dines (OUP 2002). This is the final compilation of the intense field recording - in which many of you helped - between 1996 and 1999. This Atlas updates the *Atlas of the British Flora* published by BSBI in 1962, in which the dot maps showed the distribution of each species at that time - and where would we have been without 'The Atlas' to give quick reference to the general distribution of each species? The new project aimed to update these records and to give more information on the species, and this has been achieved. The BSBI and the BRC (ITE) organised the survey, through the BSBI Recorders of the 153 Vice-counties, with thirteen regional co-ordinators, and with recording help in the field from many members of BSBI and local botanical societies such as SBRS.

At the end of the fieldwork the editing, checking and co-ordinating was a huge task for the editors, assisted by the VC Recorders. When the *New Atlas* finally arrived, the first impact was its size and WEIGHT (14lbs)! So, not surprisingly, no pocket or field book, and only with difficulty balanced on the knee... But a book for a sturdy coffee table, or to work on the floor - or, as one of the BSBI officers has acquired, a lectern for easy handling of the 910 pages.

These pages include the maps and accompanying text for 2,412 species, and are packed with information. The maps demonstrate the changes since the 1962 *Atlas*, and at the Autumn Get-together Pat Donovan, for her talk on Sussex coastal plants, had made a slide showing maps from the two Atlases for *Cochlearia danica* side-by-side, showing the dramatic spread of this plant inland up the salt-treated highways in the last 40 years.

Inevitably there are a few criticisms. Some of the coloured dots are unfortunately too pale to be easily deciphered on the shiny paper. And the decisions on 'native or introduced' for some of the long-established plants are open to differing opinions. Sadly the CD

Rom provided is not compatible with all systems. But overall - a major achievement.

My copy was on view at the Autumn meeting, and with the *New Atlas* published we shall be moving on to new important recording projects - we can look forward to tackling some of these in 2003...

Secretary's Note

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 15th March 2003

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 2.00 p.m. at Staplefield Village Hall followed by a showing of members' slides and finishing with tea and cakes. The hall will be available from 1.30 p.m.

Saturday 15th November 2003

The Autumn Get-together will be at Staplefield Village Hall. The hall will be open at 10.00 a.m. and the meeting will start promptly at 10.30 a.m. Soup and jacket potatoes will be available for lunch with tea and cakes later in the afternoon. Trevor Lording will be showing slides of *Plants of The Lizard*. Members are invited to bring books and plants for sale and any items of interest or specimens for display.

Rita Hemsley

In This Issue

President's Message	1
Secretary's Notes	1
Field Meeting Reports - East Sussex	2-3
Fungus Foray 2002	3
Field Meeting Reports - West Sussex	3-5
Alien Conifers	5
Obituary Joyce Smith MBE	6
SBRS Short Notes	7
BSBI Local Change	8-9
Officers of the Society	9
Field Meetings 2003	10

Newsletter Editor:-

Frances Abraham

The Old School, Ebernoe

Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 9LD

E. SUSSEX FIELD MEETINGS 2002

by Pat Donovan & Helen Proctor

Bellhurst Wood, Hurst Green: 4.5.02 (PD)

On a bright but fresh morning 19 members found their way down the track to Bellhurst Farm for the first meeting of the year. Late spring is surely the best time to walk in woods, and most of the typical plants were in flower.

Bellhurst is part ancient woodland (Hornbeam appeared to be the dominant tree, with evidence of past coppicing) and a deep ghyll runs north/south with a small waterfall where *Luzula sylvatica* (Great Wood-rush) grew plentifully. In a hollow on the eastern edge of the wood there were several specimens of *Cardamine bulbifera* (Coral Root). Interesting records included *Ribes nigrum* (Black Currant), *Ranunculus auricomus* (Goldilocks Buttercup) and *Orchis mascula* (Early Purple Orchid). About 30 species indicative of ancient woodland were found.

Later in the afternoon, on the way back to the start via a lane and a private drive, there were some very large specimens of *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted Orchid) not yet in flower, looking almost too perfect. They had been carefully mown around. Nearby in a meadow which looked unimproved there were several spikes of *Orchis morio* (Green-winged Orchid), along with *Genista tinctoria* (Dyer's Greenweed) and *Carex caryophylla* (Spring Sedge).

Barklye Farm, Broad Oak: 1.6.02 (PD)

In order for there to be plants left to record, SBRs member Lyn Haines had very kindly removed her sheep from an eight acre field on the farm a few weeks earlier. An unimproved west-facing meadow, it slopes down to a tributary of the Rother. It is mainly Weald clay with some drier areas, and a spring on the north side where there was *Carex panicea* (Carnation Sedge), *Montia fontana* (Blinks) and *Stachys palustris* (Marsh Woundwort).

The top of the field appeared to be damper than the bottom, with clumps of *Juncus effusus* (Soft Rush), *Ranunculus flammula* (Lesser Spearwort) and *Alopecurus geniculatus* (Marsh Foxtail). In the drier areas *Briza media* (Quaking Grass) was common, as was *Carex caryophylla* (Spring Sedge), *Carex ovalis* (Oval Sedge) and *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted Orchid).

After lunch on the lawn, with refreshment kindly provided by Lyn and her daughter, a neighbouring farmer's field was visited, which proved even more interesting than the first, as it had an area of peaty soil around a spring, and contained plants such as *Carex binervis* (Green-ribbed Sedge), *Molinia caerulea* (Purple Moor Grass), *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel) and *Cirsium dissectum* (Meadow Thistle).

The site is apparently an SSSI, was notified in 1991, and is an example of a rare habitat known as 'fen meadow'.

Ditchling Country Park: 30.6.02 (PD)

The aim of this meeting was to search for *Carex hostiana* (Tawny Sedge) which was last seen in 1989. Since then, scrub has invaded the area and, despite an intensive search, it could not be found.

Country Parks somehow seem rather tidy and this included the pond, with its *Nymphaea alba* (White Water-lily) and neat edge, but there was one healthy clump of *Carex pseudocyperus* (Cyperus Sedge), and in a nearby ditch we found *Sparganium angustifolium* (Unbranched Bur-reed), *Rumex hydrolapathum* (Water Dock) and *Ranunculus sceleratus* (Celery-leaved Buttercup). *Rosa stylosa* (Short-styled Field-rose) was confirmed in a nearby hedge.

On the open heath, *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Heath Spotted Orchid) occurred along with *Cirsium dissectum* (Meadow Thistle) and *Serratula tinctoria* (Saw-wort).

The afternoon was spent in the field opposite, which had been heavily grazed. Fortunately the cattle were not very partial to the clumps of *Genista tinctoria* (Dyer's Greenweed) which were flowering well, but the *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's-tongue) had been well and truly trampled.

High and Over: 7.7.02 (HP)

The morning was spent recording the chalk grassland flora on Cradle Hill. The downland immediately below the roadside produced a colony of *Orchis ustulata* (Burnt Orchid) and 35 flowering stems were counted. Further along the hillside another 21 flowering stems were counted. *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Orchid) was flowering profusely, and three stems of *Orchis apifera* (Bee Orchid) were seen. A close inspection of the turf by the path revealed *Thesium humifusum* (Bastard Toadflax).

We lunched at the viewpoint at High and Over and then descended steeply to Frog Firle Farm. The area around the white horse had become covered with scrub, and *Marrubium vulgare* (White Horehound) had consequently vanished from its former site. However, it was found to have recolonised similar sites lower down the hillside, showing its preference for the bare chalk near the steps and other open areas. Halfway down the hillside, *Ranunculus parviflorus* (Small-flowered Buttercup) was found, as well as *Clinopodium acinos* (Basil Thyme) and *Geranium colombinum* (Long-stalked Crane's-bill).

The brackish marshes by the Cuckmere river produced *Frankenia laevis* (Sea-heath) and *Glaux maritima* (Sea Milkwort). Further along, *Prunus cerasifera* (Cherry Plum), *Salvia verbenaca* (Wild Clary) and *Centaurea calcitrapa* (Red Star-thistle) were noted before we returned uphill to the car park.

Brede High Wood: 27.7.02 (PD)

An SNCI since 1993, Brede High Wood is owned by Southern Water and is managed sympathetically by Fountain Forestry, with the aim of making more of it accessible to the general public - in the process, the site of *Orobancha rapum-genistae* (Greater Broomrape) has been accidentally destroyed. In addition to the mixed woodland, there are open areas of acid heath, an old meadow, and an orchard. Damp rides lead down to Powdermill Reservoir.

The 13 members present, whilst trying not to trample on *Centaureum pulchellum* (Lesser Centaury) and the blue form of *Anagallis arvensis* (Scarlet Pimpernel), listened while Patrick Roper, who knows the wood well, warned us a) to keep together and b) if confronted by a boar to stand still - hoping it will think one is a tree?

We went first to the open heath where *Cuscuta epithymum* (Dodder) was growing on *Calluna vulgaris* (Ling), and then down a damp ride to see *Isolepis setacea* (Bristle Club-rush) and *Scutellaria minor* (Lesser Skullcap). Later, we forced our way through a thicket, helped by Mike Hollings, who produced his secateurs, to reach a sphagnum bog with *Viola palustris* (Marsh Violet) in it.

After lunch Patrick told us to find *Radiola linioides* (Allseed), which was much photographed. Later, he pointed out several seedlings of *Sorbus torminalis* (Wild Service-tree) at the base of a steep bank. He believes their successful germination is due to deer which jump down the slope and trample the seeds into the ground.

Although it was uphill all the way back at the end of the day, members were rewarded by the sight of a White Admiral and a Silver-washed Fritillary.

FUNGUS FORAY, Crawley Down: 28.9.02

By Arthur Hoare

The final field meeting of the year was a departure from the norm; in the past we have had bryophyte study days but this year we tried a Fungus Foray. Perhaps it would be better if we called it a 'Fungus Fun-day' led by our own fun guy Peter Russell.

Peter led us through the Monastery Wood at Crawley Down, which he said with 330 species recorded was one of the best fungal floras in East Sussex. It was not long before we were finding these odd growths in a variety of forms and colours. A few, we were told, were quite edible and tasty, while others you could eat only once. We were invited to try a little taste - some were tempted while others were not so sure. Judy Wilson was keen to try a specimen to see if it was hot and then told to spit it out. Her eyes lit up, I'm not sure whether it was the fungus working or not but this was to set the scene for the day as she and one or two others seemed very keen to try almost anything Peter had to offer. Most of the specimens in his collecting basket had pieces nibbled out of them. A

beef steak fungus was carved up and looked like a prime cut both in appearance and texture but was not sampled. One specimen was first found by scent and then by sight so it was no surprise to find *Phallus impudicus* (Common Stinkhorn). A prime photographic subject for those with their cameras.

Peter tells me that during the foray we recorded 44 species, which given the previous dry conditions was much more than he was hoping for. We even managed to add four new records during the foray. *Suillus luteus* (Slippery Jack) was found for the first time growing under one of the few pine trees. Of particular interest was the new record for *Xerocomus parasiticus* growing on *Scleroderma citrinum* (Dirt Balls) in some abundance. I was informed that it has certainly been the year for this species as it has been found it on several other forays.

Apart from new records I think perhaps the interesting part was trying to match the smells with their description. You need to have a vocabulary like a wine taster when it comes to fungi. I remember the 'freshly cut potatoes' - *Amanita citrina* (False Death Cap); 'school pencils' - *Russula lepida*; 'old gas fires' - *Tricholoma sulphureum* (Gasworks Tricholoma).

W. SUSSEX FIELD MEETINGS 2002

By Nick Sturt

Parham Park: 11.5.02

Managing a group of no less than 33 botanical anarchists might have daunted some, but Frances (of course!) carried it off with panache - although at times a sheepdog could have been useful. Starting with a careful progress east from the car-park in front of the house over sandy ground towards the icehouse, *Trifolium subterraneum* (Subterranean Clover) flowering in substantial patches was one of the delights in the sward and a good selection of other species favouring the soil was steadily accumulated. There was much debate over a *Vicia*, but alas it declined to key itself out as *V. lathyroides*, perversely insisting that it was *V. sativa nigra*. The richest area in the morning proved to be the land along the entrance drive where ditches and drier land in close proximity added substantially to the crossings-off on the card. Here it was instructive to compare *Carex flacca* (Glaucous Sedge) growing almost stem-to-stem with *C. nigra* (Common Sedge), and there were good stands of the much rarer *C. arenaria* (Sand Sedge) extending from the roadside southwards up the slope.

Joe Reardon-Smith, a BSBI member employed in the gardens at Parham, secured permission for us to see some of the treasures of the garden, including festoons of mistletoe on the apple trees. While hedonists feasted carelessly by the lakes others were more alert: Michael and Olwen noticed some sword-shaped leaves of a special green on the margin and, sure enough, discovered another West Sussex site for *Zizania latifolia* (Manchurian Rice-grass).

Next we set off across rushy meadowland towards the western boundary of the park where the highlight was definitely *Viola canina* (Heath Dog-violet), one of those species not uncommon in the county half a century or so ago but now decidedly scarce.

Ebernoe: 19.6.02

The sort of timeless summer evening celebrated in monochrome by British films of the 1940s and 50s: two fields tall with grasses and cloistered by ancient hedgerows lost somewhere in the Ebernoe woodlands.... Well, not lost exactly, as the SWT had just found and acquired them, and this meeting was part of an initial survey. The fields had been cultivated but they were returning to semi-natural grassland and on their damp clay base were already supporting good stands of *Lychnis flos-cuculli* (Ragged Robin) and *Hypericum tetrapterum* (Square-stalked St. John's-wort). There were spikes of *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted-orchid), many different grasses – one, *Trisetum flavescens* (Yellow Oat-grass), not altogether expected. Frances reports that this is a good place to hear nightingales in due season: we, of course, were rather late, but as we were leaving I may have imagined a Spitfire low overhead and Kenneth More saluting from the cockpit.

Levin Down: 20.7.02

Equipped with a Levin Down T-shirt bearing a Round-headed Rampion rampant, Anne Griffiths led 15 members around the reserve which she has looked after for no less than 25 years, providing a fund of information on management and interpreting the landscape setting.

There was much evidence of rabbit activity and it was some time before Frances was able to enter any species of grass on the recording card, but there was a fine selection of chalk downland plants, including large areas of *Helianthemum nummularia* (Rockrose) and *Viola hirta* (Hairy Violet), keeping the party interested until lunch. After refreshment we moved onto the eastern side of the reserve where chalk heath has developed – *Potentilla erecta* (Tormentil) and *Teucrium scorodonia* (Wood Sage) signalled the change – and soon we were seeing *Calluna vulgaris* (Ling): old and massive bushes and also, happily, seedlings. Here we found 'the other thyme' *Thymus pulegioides*, but it was Judy who made the discovery of the day in the form of a very small *Sagina nodosa* (Knotted Pearlwort), a new record for the reserve.

Naturally the junipers received some attention on our ramble; the age structure was mainly mature, old and senile plants; although much fruit was produced and germination in the disturbed ground was successful, the rabbit population eliminated all the seedlings: an ecological problem awaiting a solution. In the summer heat there were plenty of opportunities to pause and discuss such matters; we also considered downland species apparently absent such as Yellow-wort and some of the orchids. The subject of *Geranium columbinum* (Long-stalked Crane's-bill)

also arose: there used to be a lot of it, surely? And as we left the reserve by the stile, there it was.

Adur Valley: 10.8.02

Members gathering at the lay-by on the A283 studied *Senecio inaequidens* while Beryl and Alan adjusted their plans in order to avoid the unforeseen Adur Bath Tub Race. At the second marshalling point we were detained by studying the glandular pits on the fruits of *Erodium moschatum* (Musk Storksbill) growing on the verge, but we were soon hard at work on the bank of one of the ditches near the river where attention was focused on aquatics; or, more accurately, Alan demonstrated some subtle points about such plants as *Potamogeton lucens* (Shining Pondweed) and *Alisma lanceolatum* (Narrow-leaved Water-plantain) while Beryl and Paul explored the world of *Poaceae* in the hope of being able to distinguish *Festuca pratensis* from *F. arundinacea* without resorting to the domestic microscope.

Berula erecta (Lesser Water-parsnip) and a little *Oenanthe aquatica* (Fine-leaved Water-dropwort) were admired, but the content of these early ditches appeared to be remarkably uniform in character, dominated by *P. lucens*, *Elodea nuttallii* and *Ceratophyllum demersum*. It was difficult to penetrate this layer to find any other species which might be lurking below, even though Alan went majestically through his entire repertoire of techniques of casting his grapnel before a spellbound audience, many of whom must have been reminded of the fly-fishing skills of the legendary J R Hartley. His master-stroke, however, was more reminiscent of the tactician Rommel: calling a lunch so early that it took even dedicated diners completely by surprise.

The sunshine which smiled on our picnic soon dissipated. We moved eastwards under gathering storm-clouds but all eyes were focused on the richest of the ditches where several notable species were growing in association: *Carex pseudocyperus* (Cyperus Sedge), *Hippuris vulgaris* (Mare's-tail), *Hottonia palustris* (Water-violet) still in flower, *Groenlandia densa* (Opposite-leaved Pondweed) and *Myriophyllum verticillatum* (Whorled Water-milfoil); the last seems to have declined significantly in recent years.

Suddenly thunder and lightning threatened ever nearer. By the time cars were regained the rain was torrential and we fought our way back past already soaked race enthusiasts heading towards the event. There was the feeling that for the captains of the bathtubs it was going to be a difficult decision whether to set sail with plugs in or out.

Hurston Warren: 18.8.02

The botanical exuberance of the 12 members was necessarily contained by the courtesy due to golfers but we were soon safely embedded in the bog at Hurston Warren, free to enjoy the extensive colony of *Vaccinium oxycoccos* (Cranberry) and bootfuls of foetid water. In the forefront of all this was Frances, venturing where even Alan feared to tread, in search of *Eriophorum vaginatum* (Hare's-tail Cottongrass)

among the plentiful *E. latifolia*; we did eventually find this scarce Sussex plant in one small stand, past its best but with tattered woolly heads proudly erect.

We were accompanied by John and Kate Glazier who live on the golf course. They invited us to picnic in their idyllic garden and plied us generously with home-made elderflower cordial and beer. Rod gave a masterclass on the Sphagnum species which he had collected during the morning, after which we headed for the Glazier's bog, but were detained by their sandy field where we discovered quantities of *Potentilla argentea* (Hoary Cinquefoil) and *Trifolium arvense* (Hare's-foot Clover). The bog itself was also interesting (notably *Carex paniculata* and *C. curta*).... and splendidly moist!

The rest of the afternoon was spent in Monkmead Woods. Here Bruce showed us *Viola palustris* (Marsh Violet), a large amount of *Scirpus sylvaticus* (Wood Clubrush) and a bog rather different from the previous two and notable for *Potamogeton polygonifolius* (Bog Pondweed) and *Eleocharis multicaulis* (Many-stalked Spike-rush).

This account is an inadequate summary of a very rich day in the field: once again members were indebted to Bruce for his organisation and leadership.

Chichester Harbour: 31.8.02

Alan briefed the group fully in the car-park: the desired *Atriplex longipes* (Long-stalked Orache) was a notably unattractive plant. So we (that is 21 members and 5 visitors from Hants and Dorset) trudged off through Fishbourne Marsh, failing to find this late in the season the specialities of *Juncus subnodulosus* (Blunt-flowered Rush) and *Catabrosa aquatica* (Whorl-grass) but enjoying the *Cyperus longus* (Galingale) which Arnold first reported from the pond.

Fishbourne Creek – from where, according to the very recent theory of archaeologists, the Romans mounted their invasion of the island – presented us with much *Apium graveolens* (Wild Celery) and many fairly unalluring specimens of *Atriplex prostrata* (Spear-leaved Orache); the latter we fell upon, hoping to find flowers on stalks in order to claim its close relation as a plant new to the vice-county. Two individuals were found which each bore one such flower and which atriplicologists hailed as hybrid material. In due course John Akeroyd confirmed the specimens as the notably unattractive *A. x gustafssoniana* (*A. prostrata* x *longipes*). But there were other delights, such as *Lepidium latifolium* (Dittander) in quantity.

We worked our way along the muddy edge of Chichester Harbour to emerge on the bank and walk by quantities of *Petroselinum segetum* (Corn-parsley) and *Torilis nodosa* (Knotted Hedge-parsley).

In the afternoon we worked the western side of the Creek, with Paul and Tony on the look out for two Sea-lavenders (*Limonium vulgare* and *L. humile*) to complete their collection of Sussex species. Only the

hybrid (*L. x neumannii*) eluded them, but meanwhile others, who had had the foresight to provide themselves with enlarged copies of Stace's illustrations, were successfully identifying species of *Salicornia*.

This, however, was the meeting that will go down as a blot in the annals of Sussex botany for Paul's sacrilegious hailing of the venerable Alan in the disgraceful words 'Oi, Knappy!'.

Jack and Jill: 14.9.02

This was another of Alan's Good Ideas, an afternoon meeting to look at arable weeds on the chalk. Twenty-two of us began scouring extensive stubble fields. One of the desired weeds eventually presented itself: *Silene noctiflora* (Night-flowering Catchfly) with its allegedly pink flowers almost yellow (or at least a light tan) was found in small quantity; there were also two *Lamiums*, *L. amplexicaule* (Henbit) and *L. hybridum* (Cut-leaved Deadnettle) – the latter quite frequent – *Stachys arvensis* (Field Woundwort), several poppies (including both subspecies of *Papaver dubium*), one specimen of *Chaenorhinum minus* (Lesser Snapdragon), and the two *Kickxias*; several of the party recalled large amounts of *Chrysanthemum segetum* (Corn Marigold) here some twenty years ago in fields since converted to pasture, but a few specimens of this cheerful plant were found lurking nearby.

It was only *Polygonum rurivagum* (Cornfield Knotgrass) which eluded the party, although it had been present in 2001. But as we were trekking across the field in question Alan quietly confided to me that he had never known the plant to be found in the same site in consecutive years....

RECORDING OF ALIEN CONIFERS

By Rod Stern

There has been a tendency to overlook alien conifers when recording. Planted conifers whether in plantations or, as single trees should not be recorded. However there are several species which commonly regenerate naturally. Seedlings, saplings and larger trees which have clearly originated naturally should be recorded.

The main species concerned are those which have been used in forestry plantations. These are as follows:-

Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). The Scots Pine which is a familiar feature mainly on acid soils in Sussex, occurs frequently as semi-natural woodland, often in mixture with birch. It is usually easy to distinguish between planted and natural woodland, as plantations mainly comprise trees of the same age, and at least in the younger stages will be in clearly defined rows. It often occurs as single trees in mixed broadleaf woodland and has probably been correctly recorded as naturally occurring in this situation.

Corsican Pine (*Pinus nigra* ssp. *lancio*). Very commonly planted in Sussex, but not often self-sown. Seedlings can be difficult to distinguish from Scots Pine.

Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*). The commonest tree in Britain, but not common in Sussex as it needs much higher rainfall. Seeds itself freely.

Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*). Commonly planted in Sussex, but less so recently and seldom self-sown.

European Larch (*Larix decidua*). Commonly planted in Sussex. Seedlings and saplings often frequent among or near old trees.

Japanese Larch (*Larix kaempferi*) and Hybrid larch (*Larix x marschlinsii*). Commonly planted but not often self-sown. Can be difficult to distinguish between the two.

Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). Commonly planted and frequently with natural seedlings and saplings on the more acid soils.

Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*). Frequently planted 1950-1980, much less so now. Tends to have abundant natural regeneration; likely to be increasingly troublesome in ancient woodlands.

Other species which may be found with natural regeneration include Lawson's Cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*), Western Red-cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), European Silver-fir (*Abies alba*) and Giant Fir (*Abies grandis*).

Obituary: Joyce Smith MBE

Sadly, I have to report that Mrs Joyce Smith MBE died on 7th December. She was one of the few remaining members of the original Surrey Flora Committee, which included such well-known botanists as Ted Lousley, Cecil Prime, Charles Petch, Ray Clarke, Wilf Warren and Ted Wallace. Together with a number of others, they produced the records for the eventual publication of the *Flora of Surrey* in 1976. Joyce was secretary of the Surrey Flora Committee and BSBI recorder for V.C.17 for very many years. She had not had good health for a number of years but attended a meeting of the Surrey Flora Committee at Sidney Wood which I led last August, and was as cheerful and enthusiastic as always. BSBI members will see a full obituary in *Watsonia* in due course.

Rod Stern

Concerning Dr F V Paxton, Coralroot and some elusive Herb Paris by Nick Sturt

A pleasant way of passing a winter evening in the 1980s was to translate the lists of additional records patiently processed on his computer by Peter Donovan into tetrad dots on the maps in the *Sussex Plant Atlas*. On one such occasion I was intrigued to find myself adding two adjacent pencil marks in squares south of Chichester for *Cardamine bulbifera* (Coralroot). A glance at the OS map suggested that the plants had almost certainly been found in Hunston Copse, a small, almost rhomboidal patch of woodland on the coastal plain.

In a sense, Elisabeth and I knew this wood well. Hunston Copse has the appearance of a relict from larger swathes of woodland which once covered the plain and which were cleared for farming, many in early times. The geological map indicates a drift of Brickearth over London Clay, and the ground is quite damp. Among a fair selection of species associated with ancient woodland, *Daphne laureola* (Spurge Laurel) is relatively plentiful here and its presence in hedges elsewhere on the Manhood Peninsula is perhaps also suggestive of a once more general tree cover over the area. In another sense, however, Elisabeth and I knew this wood not well enough, for we had made numerous visits to it in search of the *Paris quadrifolia* (Herb Paris) which was reputed to grow there, all with a lack of success which some might justly describe as spectacular. As I reflected on the two additional Coralroot records I realised that this too had eluded us....

But what of the status of Coralroot in Hunston Copse? That same map in the *Atlas* clearly showed that it was a plant of the central Weald, with one outlier (of dubious status) in the far west near Rogate: its presence about one mile south of Chichester looked odd. The explanation was several years in coming. Two copies of Arnold's *Flora of Sussex* which had been extensively annotated by Henry Guernonprez were presented to Howard by the illustrious E M Venables. Howard lent them to me and so it was while browsing through one of them that I noticed against the entry for *C. bulbifera*: 'Hunston Copse, introduced by Dr Paxton from Tunbridge Wells.' Confirmation, therefore, that the Coralroot found in the copse had been originally brought in by human agency.... But who was Dr Paxton?

Not a great deal of rummaging in the Chichester Record Office produced some information about the introducer. The 1871 Census pinpoints Francis Valentine Paxton, as a 35 year-old bachelor practising as a physician in West Street Chichester.

Their *Proceedings* reveal him to have been a stalwart member of the not inconsiderably named Chichester and West Sussex Natural History and Microscopical Society throughout the 1880s, serving on the committee in various capacities alongside Arnold. The initials FVP in the *Flora of Sussex* testify to his help

with the original project, and he also appears in the list of subscribers to the second edition. I suspect that his relationship with the Arnold family was somewhat closer, since a certain Master G H Arnold, probably a nephew of our botanist, was lodging in his house during the 1880s.

Dr Paxton apparently had quite a penchant for introducing plants and we shall probably never know the true extent of these activities in the Chichester area. We do have it on record, however, that he added *Nymphoides peltata* (Fringed Water-lily) to the already obsolete canal in Chichester and he likewise brought Oxford Ragwort to the city. This last came as something of a surprise to me. I had tended to embrace the simple notion that in the 1790s *Senecio squalidus* scaled the walls of the Oxford Botanic Garden and waited (several decades) for a train. But in fact it first arrived in Chichester direct from Oxford without the aid of the railway: Arnold specifies that it was an introduction and then a Guernonprez annotation gives the credit or the blame (depending on your point of view) to Dr Paxton and corrects the published date of 1898 to 1888.

In the history of Sussex botanists Paxton is a link between the two important figures of Arnold and Guernonprez: it is already clear that he co-operated closely with Frederick Arnold, and the circumstantial evidence from the annotated *Flora* implies at least an acquaintance with Guernonprez. The chronological facts are that Guernonprez took over *Selborne Notes* in the *West Sussex Gazette* on the death of Arnold in 1906 and continued to write the weekly column until he himself died in 1924, while Paxton was living in South Pallant (Chichester) until at least 1924 when, presumably in his eighties, he disappears from the local directory.

Returning to the Herb Paris in Hunston Copse, there is no reason for it to come under suspicion as another of example of Paxton's creativity, even if it too is something of an outlier in relation to its main concentration in the South Harting area. It is reported in Arnold's *Sussex Flora* as having been found in 'Hunston Wood' in 1881 by Mr G Jeffrey (another leading light of the local society) who declared it 'abundant': even if Paxton had introduced the plant as early as 1870 it is hardly likely to have become 'abundant' in so short a time.

To my knowledge Herb Paris was last seen there in about 1997 by a member of the now abbreviated Chichester Natural History Society. Optimism not quite extinguished, Elisabeth and I shall probably venture forth again to Hunston Copse in the coming season.... on this occasion hoping to find, in addition to the infuriatingly elusive Paris, some descendants of Dr Francis Paxton's Coralroot.

Postscript

The annotations of the two Guernonprez copies of Arnold's *Flora* have been transcribed by Frances using a combination of a strong magnifying glass and

superhuman intuition. They are available from her on receipt of an A4 sae and £1.20 in stamps to cover the cost of copying (address on page 1).

SBRS Short Notes:

Is this global warming?

Pat Donovan noticed an interesting letter in her newspaper from a hurdle-maker from Slinfold who has coppiced hazel near Leith Hill for 25 years: whereas he used to cut it on a seven to eight year cycle, he now cuts it every five or six years because the wood grows so fast...

More on violets

Betty Bishop was interested by the item in the January 2002 Newsletter on the making of Easter crosses from violets at Halknaker - because she remembers her mother telling of her own father, who died in 1893, doing something similar at Lancing, where he was a stone-mason. He would make a metal cross, fill it with damp sand, and arrange the white, pink and mauve violets in patterns on moss in the sand. Betty adds that there were plenty of Sweet Violets there even fifty years ago - but now there are not many. She also says that in the early 1900's it was the custom for young people in Shoreham to walk to Coombes to pick primroses on Good Friday - once again, there are far fewer there now, because the wood is no longer coppiced.

First Signs of Spring

Arthur Hoare found *Ranunculus ficaria* (Lesser Celandine) in full flower on the 31-12-02 on a sheltered stream bank in Wakehurst Place Gardens. This is about a month before they are usually seen. He has also observed *Primula vulgaris* (Primrose) flowering since November.

Ranunculus ficaria
Lesser Celandine



BSBI “Local Change”

Some of you may remember the BSBI Monitoring Scheme which ran in 1987/88 and recorded tetrads from selected 10km squares across the country. Well, it's back, now in the form of the new BSBI “Local Change” survey which aims to record the same tetrads over the two year period 2003/4. A key aspect of the scheme this time is to encourage participation by as many people as possible.

The SBRS will be organising the recording in Sussex and some of our field meetings over the next two years will be devoted to this recording. To get really good results we'd like as many of you as possible to get involved individually or in local groups – we feel sure that you'll enjoy being involved. One feature of this recording scheme is that all data submission to the BSBI will be done electronically. In our case this will be done by submitting all records to Paul Harmes for East Sussex and Alan Knapp for West Sussex. We will then enter the data and submit it to the BSBI. This note describes the scheme and how we plan to organise the recording in Sussex.

Areas to be recorded

The recording is focussed on just three tetrads (2km x 2km squares) from one in every nine 10km squares. In Sussex the 10km squares are shown in the map below and are SU80, SU83, TQ10, TQ13, TQ40, TQ43 and TQ70. Note that although part of TQ73 is in the administrative county of E.Sussex it is not within the Watsonian vice county of East Sussex. The tetrads to be recorded in each square are those designated A, J and W in

the standard tetrad lettering scheme. One difference to the original monitoring scheme is that only the tetrads are to be recorded not the whole 10km square.

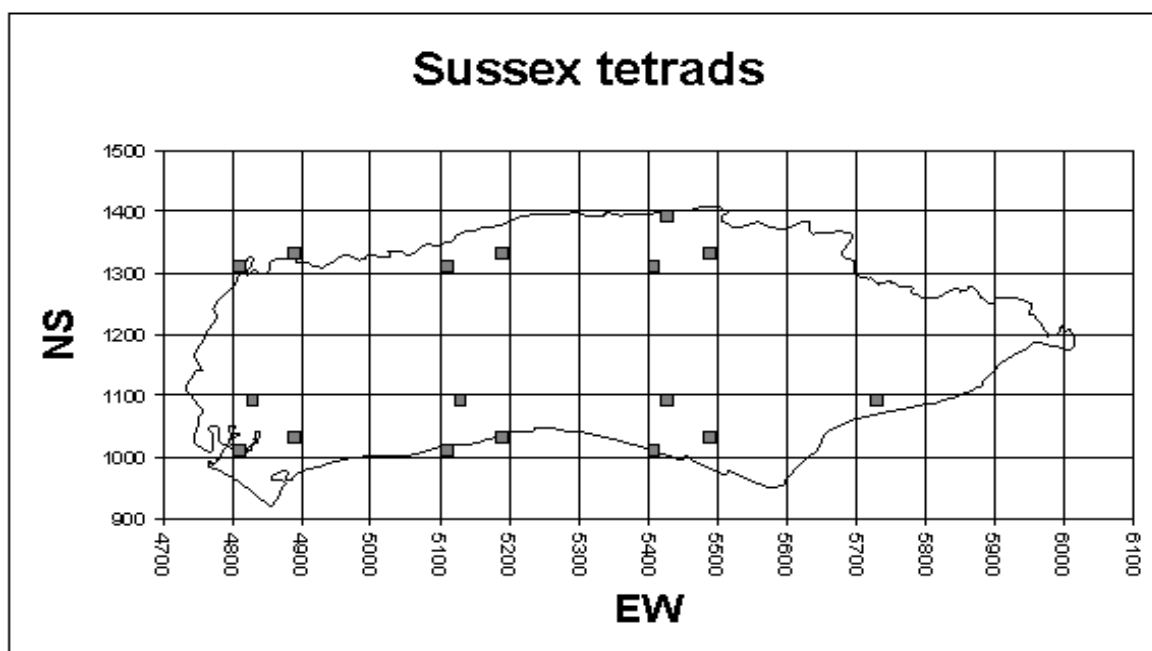
Time period

The recording is restricted to the two years 2003 and 2004 so, even if you have records for these tetrads from previous years, these records cannot be accepted as the purpose of the scheme is to record what is present in these areas in the defined period. During that period we want to make sure that each tetrad is visited at least once in the spring, once in early summer and once in late summer.

Organisation in Sussex

We would like to make a really good start in 2003 with recording in all tetrads during that year so that we can examine the data and direct recording to under-recorded areas or searches for missing species during 2004.

- Some of you may wish to focus on a particular tetrad or tetrads. If you are going to do this please let us know so that we can keep track of which areas are getting good coverage and which may need extra attention. If you are going to record on an ad hoc basis then simply keep sending in the records regularly as requested below.
- If you volunteer to record in a given area and for some reason find that you cannot do so please tell us immediately as we want to avoid a situation where we believe an area is



being well recorded but nothing is in fact happening.

- Please send in your data regularly, don't wait until the end of the year. Ideally, in the first year (2003), we'd like to receive records in mid May, end of July and finally in October. This will allow us to spread the load of data entry and also get a feel for how things are going.
- Please use the SBRS recording cards for the recording – you can get copies from Alan Knapp or Paul Harmes at field meetings or by sending an A4 SAE to either of us. The usual rules apply. For the commoner species, simply cross off the names on the card but for the species marked with a + symbol or whose names are not on the card please give full details, including 6 figure grid reference.
- Please make sure you tell us when you visited the tetrad so we can check whether there have been visits at all times of the year.
- Please stick strictly to the selected tetrads – stop recording at the edge of the tetrad.
- If any of you want to submit your data electronically please contact us and we can decide on a method which is mutually convenient.

If you have not been involved in recording schemes like this before do please join in. It is amazing how much each extra person can bring. There is good evidence from work by Tim Rich that if two recorders go around the same route only 60% of the species they record will be recorded by both. This means that 40% of the records for each recorder will be unique. When you add to this the fact that different people look at different areas in the tetrads then you can see how every person can add something.

If you want to take part but are not sure about anything or have any queries about the areas to be recorded then please contact one of us. To get the scheme started we will hold an initial early field meeting at Slinfold (see field meetings list for details). We'd especially like members who haven't been involved in such recording before to come along. However, you do not need to wait until then to start, you could be recording Snowdrops in January (weather permitting!).

Mary Briggs, Paul Harmes, Arthur Hoare and Alan Knapp

FIELD MEETINGS 2003

Sunday 30 March Alan Knapp	Slinfold. Introduction to <i>BSBI Local Change Monitoring</i> – members new to tetrad recording especially welcome. Meet in car-park by disused station at end of Spring Lane TQ113310.
Saturday 10 May Nick Sturt	Itchenor. <i>BSBI Local Change Monitoring</i> by Chichester Harbour. Meet in main car-park SZ798012 sign-posted W from village street. (Parking permits will be provided.)
Saturday 17 May Paul Harmes	Nr. High & Over. NB meet at 10.15am. <i>BSBI Local Change Monitoring</i> in TQ40W. Meet at High and Over car-park TQ509011. From here approx one mile walk to tetrad for recording – hence need for early start!
Wednesday 28 May Rita Hemsley	Steyning. NB evening meeting 6.30pm. Five unimproved fields and two small woods with owners interested in conservation. Meet at The Crowsnest, at the end of Sopers Lane (which is a narrow farm track turning W off Coombes Lane at TQ180102).
Saturday 31 May Bruce Middleton	Fittleworth. Sandy unimproved fields on Horncroft Farm. Park in Horncroft Farm courtyard TQ005173, turning W off minor road S of Lower Fittleworth.
Sunday 15 June Derek Wise/David Lang	Barcombe. Survey land owned by Derek, meeting at Berewood House, Barcombe, TQ424149. In the afternoon to nearby Knowlands Wood with David.
Sunday 29 June Dawn Nelson	Harting Down. Recording downland for the National Trust. Meet NT car-park off B2141 at top of Harting Hill, SU790180.
Sunday 13 July Pat Donovan	Ashdown Forest. <i>BSBI Local Change Monitoring</i> . Meet at Church Hill car-park TQ494326.
Saturday 19 July Rod Stern	Lodsworth. Survey of Prickly Nut Wood. Meet at SU927243 along minor road between Lodsworth Common and Leggatts Hill; park on verges.
Saturday 26 July Rachel Nicholson	Robertsbridge. Exploring marshy areas around Robertsbridge. Meet in small car-park on minor road (formerly A21) N of village, TQ738239. We may move on in the afternoon.
Saturday 16 August Alan Knapp	Winchelsea. Recording ditches N of Winchelsea. Meet in Winchelsea, layby opposite the public conveniences in Monks Walk, TQ904172.
Saturday 23 August Frances Abraham	Forest Mere area. <i>BSBI Local Change Monitoring</i> . Meet in layby by B2070 by garden centre at Rake SU806279 & we'll move on in fewer cars.

ALL MEETINGS START AT 10.45 UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE.
Those attending SBRS field meetings do so at their own risk.