

# Welsh Bulletin

No. 91  
January 2013



**Editors : Richard Pryce, Sally Whyman & Katherine Slade**

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**Image 1:** Paul Green, Acting Welsh Officer. at The Raven, Co. Wexford. Photo: O. Martin. (See guest editorial, page 4 and article, page 24).

**2:** *Carex divulsa* ssp. *leersii* (Leer's Sedge) found on the AGM. Photo: John Crellin. (See article, page 9)

**3:** *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid) found by the Monmouthshire Meadows Group. Photo: Keith Moseley. (See article, page 14)

**Front Cover Photo:** *Astragalus glycyphyllos* (Wild Liquorice) found at Marford Quarry (v.c.50) during a field meetings associated with the AGM. Photo: Keith Moseley. (See report, page 9)



Botanical  
Society of the  
British  
Isles

## Welsh Bulletin

Issue 91  
January 2013

### Editors :

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Most back issues are still available on request (originals or photocopies) @ £2 per issue, please contact Sally Whyman or Katherine Slade. Cheques are payable to BSBI Wales. The last issue was no.90, released in June 2012.

Back issues over one year old are currently being uploaded to the website.  
[www.watsonia.org.uk/html/  
welsh\\_bulletin.html](http://www.watsonia.org.uk/html/welsh_bulletin.html)

All articles, news, photos, guest editorials and other items for inclusion in the Jun 2013 issue should be sent to an editor by **25th April 2013**.

Please send any plant records to your Vice-County Recorder (see BSBI Yearbook).

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## Guest Editorial

PAUL GREEN, BSBI Acting Welsh Officer, c/o Department of Biodiversity and Systematic Biology, National Museum Wales, Cardiff, CF10 3NP. [welshofficer@bsbi.org.uk](mailto:welshofficer@bsbi.org.uk)

By the time you read this, I will have been in the post as Acting Welsh Officer for several months. In that time, besides travelling around Wales, I have been up to Edinburgh for a meeting of country officers and across to the BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting in Cambridge. It was a good chance to meet many Welsh BSBI members and others from around the UK that I have not seen for years.

Something I have been wanting for years was the BSBI to change its name to the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland. I was pleased to be part of the membership to give that name change an overwhelming yes vote at the Special General Meeting. If I had not taken the job of Acting Welsh Officer, I would never have gone to Cambridge as I would not have contemplated travelling that far from my home in Co. Wexford.

I am covering for Polly Spencer-Vellacott while she is on maternity leave. If you have not yet heard, Polly gave birth to a boy 'Jay' on 6 November, weighing in at 6lb 4oz. Mother and baby are doing well. I wish them, and dad Martin, all the best for the future.

My office is based in Cardiff at the National Museum of Wales. A great place to work and be around other like minded people. Having a herbarium at hand is just wonderful! Something I have always loved doing is looking at squashed brown plants (rather boring to the vast percentage of the

population...), but more so is touching a plant that a past botanist collected so many years ago. Then, I enjoy going and seeing if I could find it where it had been seen all those years previously.

You may think I am mad or eccentric. I keep being told that I am too young to be eccentric! I am hoping the Welsh spirits will be kind to me like the Irish spirits are in Ireland, when it comes to finding plants. Often I am out and about and a plant name appears in my head. When this happens, I know I will find the plant. When I am walking, I take it I can recognise the habitat. But it also happens when I am driving along. This is the way I found my first Bird's-nest Orchid in Co. Waterford, in the wood I was passing and, in Co. Wexford, a tree of *Sorbus devoniensis* (Devon Whitebeam). That tree was over  $\frac{1}{2}$  a kilometre from where I stopped the car, in a field hedge.

Hopefully, I will meet many of you this year on field meetings or at the Annual General Meeting at Beaumaris, Anglesey in June.

# **51<sup>st</sup> Welsh AGM Field Meeting and Conference**

with the 31st Exhibition Meeting

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June to Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2013

The Bulkeley Hotel, Beaumaris, Anglesey, LL58 8AW, 01248 810415

Organiser: DELYTH WILLIAMS, *BSBI Recorder for Denbighshire (v.c.50) & Chair BSBI Committee for Wales. Bryn Siriol, Graig Fechan, Ruthin, Denbighshire, LL15 2HA.* [delyth@siriol.myzen.co.uk](mailto:delyth@siriol.myzen.co.uk)

The 51<sup>st</sup> Welsh AGM will be based in The Bulkeley Hotel in the attractive town of Beaumaris, on the edge of the Menai Strait, with views over the water to Snowdonia beyond.

This year the Conference element has been shortened and follows the 2013 National AGM, which is to be held at the same venue over the previous few days.

The National AGM disperses after breakfast on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> or members are very welcome to stay on for the Welsh AGM which will be at 09:30am. This will be followed by a choice of excursions, probably to Cwm Idwal or Treborth Botanic Garden and the shore of the Menai Strait. On Friday night there will be an evening lecture, followed on Saturday with a visit to the classic limestone of the Great Orme, Llandudno. Departure thereafter.

The hotel price is expected to be about £60 per person, per night, for dinner, bed & breakfast, with a small discount for those staying 3 nights or longer to include the National meeting. There will be a supplement of £10 per night for single occupancy and a small Conference fee.

A full programme and ONE booking form for BOTH AGMs is available on the website. The booking form will also be sent out with BSBI News 122 in early 2013. Any queries to Delyth, [delyth@siriolbrynn.co.uk](mailto:delyth@siriolbrynn.co.uk).

**We look forward to welcoming you to Anglesey**

# **BSBI Field Meetings Wales - 2013**

SARAH STILLE, *BSBI Recorder for Merioneth (v.c.48). The Quillet, Berwyn Street, Llandrillo, Corwen, Denbighshire, LL21 0TH. mossysal@btinternet.com*

These dates are for your diary only, full details will be in the BSBI Year Book 2013. Please note that bookings will not be taken until then.

## **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March**

*Polypodium* workshop. National Museum Cardiff, v.c.41

Leaders: Paul Green & Matt Sibley

## **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March**

Conifer workshop. Field Study Council Rhyd-y-creua /The Drapers' Field Centre

Leaders: Paul Green & Matt Parratt

## **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> to Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May**

Plas Caerdeon, Merioneth Residential, v.c.48

Leader: Sarah Stille

## **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June**

Welsh AGM.

The Bulkeley Hotel, Beaumaris, Anglesey, v.c.52

Organiser: Delyth Williams

## **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June**

Elan Valley Near Rhayader, Powys, Radnorshire, v.c.43

Leaders: Ray Woods, Sue Spencer & Liz Dean

## **Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June**

Grass workshop at Penallt, Monmouthshire, v.c.35

Leaders: Paul Green & Stephanie Tyler

## **Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June to Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July**

Glynhir Recording Week, Carmarthenshire, v.c.44

Leaders: Kath & Richard Pryce

## **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July**

Brwyn-llynau Fields, Merioneth, v.c.48

Leader: Rod Gritten

## **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July**

Aberystwyth's twin hills: Pendinas and Craig Glais, Cardiganshire, v.c.46

Leaders: Steve Chambers & Andy Jones

## **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> August**

Coed Cilgroeslwyd, Denbighshire, v.c.50

Leader: Delyth Williams

## **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September**

Churton House, Pulverbatch, Shropshire, v.c.40

Leader: Dr Kate Thorne

As ever, many thanks to those who have offered to lead meetings this year. Please consider doing one in 2014 and feel free to talk to your local vice-county recorder with any ideas you may have - your input is invaluable.

Or you can throw ideas at me, Sarah Stille at [mossysal@btinternet.com](mailto:mossysal@btinternet.com)

# **Botanical recording meetings in Monmouthshire (v.c.35) in 2013**

STEPHANIE TYLER, *steph\_tyler2001@hotmail.com*, tel. (01600) 719890  
ELSA WOOD, *info@thenurtons.co.uk*, tel. (01291) 689253  
*BSBI Recorders for Monmouthshire (v.c.35)*

Steph Tyler and Elsa Wood, Monmouthshire joint recorders, want to establish regular meetings of keen botanists in Monmouthshire to help with identification problems and to encourage recording for the new BSBI Atlas that is collecting data from 2000 to 2020.

In 2013, we are planning a series of meetings to which anyone with some knowledge of and interest in plants is welcomed. They may last all day from 10am to 4pm, so please bring a picnic lunch.

The first is scheduled for Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May and will be in the Caerwent area, hopefully within the MOD Caerwent grounds on limestone grassland. Meet at 9.30am for this all day session (meeting place to be confirmed). Please email or phone nearer the time for details.

Dates for your diary:

<b>Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Caerwent area
<b>Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June</b>	Shirenewton area - grassland
<b>Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July</b>	The British – brownfield site
<b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> August</b>	Sudbrook coastal
<b>Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September</b>	Penyvan Pond near Blackwood

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## **Erratum** (Welsh Bulletin no.90, June 2012)

The *Viola odorata* record (see Richard Birch's *Viola* article, p.12, Issue 90) is in Flintshire, v.c.51, rather than Denbighshire, v.c.50 as stated in the title.

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# A new botanical group for Glamorgan (v.c.41)

DAVID BARDEN, *91 Newbridge Road, Llantrisant, Mid-Glamorgan, CF72 8EY.  
dbarden77@yahoo.co.uk, (01443) 224149*

KAREN WILKINSON, *5 Wyndham Street, Tongwynlais, Cardiff, CF15 7LN  
JULIAN WOODMAN, BSBI Recorder for East Glamorgan (v.c. 41), c/o Countryside Council  
for Wales (Personal), Unit 4, Castleton Court, Fortran Road, Cardiff, CF3 0LT*

Following an excellent day's botanising at Craig y Llyn in the north of the vice-county on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012 and a few explorative discussions, it has been decided to start a botanical group in Glamorgan in time for the 2013 recording season.

We will be titled the 'Glamorgan Botany Group', and will aim to provide a way for botanists, whether beginners or experts, to get involved in the enjoyable challenge of recording the flora of the vice-county. It is hoped to keep the scope of activities fairly broad, so excursions might involve chasing up long-lost sites, updating records for less common species, or simply visiting less-frequented areas to see what we can find. At the same time, we will of course be collecting plant records to provide a solid basis for any future Flora projects.

As well as noting the presence of species in a particular site/square, we will be hoping to encourage the recording of additional details useful for continued monitoring, such as populations, precise locations, and habitats.

We also hope that the Group will provide a useful forum for swapping identification tips, getting to grips with critical taxa, and learning more about the botany of the county in general.

Initially at least, the group will be focusing on east Glamorgan (approximately from Maesteg eastwards), but we will of course be happy to consider requests for visits to the west of the vice-county, especially if you would be interested in planning or leading an excursion.

We plan to draw up a list of excursions for circulation in February 2013. If you would like to receive details of these, or have any questions about the Group, please contact David Barden (details above).

We look forward to welcoming you on our excursions!

# Report on the 50<sup>th</sup> AGM of the BSBI in Wales 2012

DELYTH WILLIAMS, *BSBI Recorder for Denbighshire (v.c.50) & Chair BSBI Committee for Wales.* *delyth@siriol.myzen.co.uk*

*With a contribution by SARAH STILLE, BSBI Recorder for Merioneth (v.c.48).*  
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Just under 60 delegates converged on the Bryn Howel Hotel, Trefor, Llangollen, Denbighshire (v.c.50) from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2012. The hotel was fully booked by 40 residents, others finding accommodation nearby or living locally. All agreed that the hotel 'did us proud': a pleasant venue, plenty of space and excellent food contributed to a most enjoyable few days. That this was the first mid-week conference for the Welsh AGM did not seem to deter attendance.

Wednesday afternoon saw two walking groups heading in different directions, one led by Emily Meilleur up the mountain towards Trefor Rocks and the other led by Polly Spencer-Vellacott along the canal path towards the canal basin and the magnificent Froncysyllte aqueduct, now a World Heritage Site.

On Wednesday evening, the Chair announced a change to the programme. Regrettably, Dr. Goronwy Wynne, who was to have delivered a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary lecture, was reported as recovering from surgery and unable to be with us. Delyth Williams, recorder for v.c.50, gave a brief presentation on Denbighshire, followed by an update on progress by the Welsh Officer, Polly Spencer-Vellacott.

Our exhibition space was as usual amply furnished with an array of specimens and displays, culminating in a masterly workshop on *Rosa* by Kate Thorne (see image 4, page 10). At the conference dinner a toast was proposed to the memory of Commander John Topp R.N., in grateful acknowledgement of his legacy to the BSBI in Wales. Rounding

off the evening, Andy Jones, CCW botanist, delivered a most stimulating and thought-provoking lecture on 'Kinds of Rarity'.

Thursday presented a choice of four options for excursions for delegates.

Marford Quarry is a disused sand and gravel quarry owned by the North Wales Wildlife Trust, originally opened in 1927 to provide materials for the construction of the Mersey Tunnel. It comprises a wide range of interesting species and the group, ably led by Julie Rose, saw *Carex divulsa* ssp. *leersii* (Leer's Sedge) (see image 2 on inside front cover), some more sites for *Astragalus glycyphyllos* (Wild Liquorice) (see image on front cover), *Hypericum montanum* (Pale St. John's-wort), as well as four new species of *Rubus*.

The Alyn Waters' Country Park is an extensive site yielding ever more treasures. Although too early to see it in flower, the party, led by Polly Spencer-Vellacott, was able to see the many hundreds of recently identified *Epipactis dunensis* (Dune Helleborine) which is thought to originate in Newborough Warren on Anglesey, some 70 miles away (S. Povey, pers. comm.). Other plants of interest were *Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid), *Lathyrus nissolia* (Grass Vetchling) and *Silene vulgaris* (Bladder Campion).

The group at the Wrexham Industrial Site was able to confirm a large stand of *Calamagrostis epigejos* (Wood Small-reed). This is a second record for the vice-county, the other being in Colwyn Bay some 50 miles away. This part of the site is a large flat

area comprising a stream and a variety of substrates derived from the long-since demolished Ferodo factory. *Lepidium latifolium* (Dittander) was found again this year, as was *Crepis biennis* (Rough Hawk's-beard), both of which now appear to be on the increase in similar sites. New finds were *Ononis spinosa* (Spiny Restarrow), *Sison amomum* (Stone Parsley) and *Geranium pusillum* (Small-flowered Crane's-bill). Thanks to Martyn Stead and Graham Lowden for leading the group.

The Eyarth Rocks SSSI group, thanks to Kate Thorne, added significantly to an already lengthy list for this limestone outcrop and woodland. *Rubus caesius* (Dewberry), *R. ulmifolius* (Elm-leaved Bramble), *Leontodon hispidus* (Rough Hawkbit) and *Dryopteris affinis* subsp. *borreri* (Scaly Male-fern) were firsts, but the group was able to confirm up to 20 plants of *Campanula trachelium* (Nettle-leaved Bellflower) along the path and a new

site for *Paris quadrifolia* (Herb Paris). The former has only one record in Denbighshire (v.c.50) since 2000. Other finds worth noting were a splendid specimen of *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly-orchid) as well as *Hieracium hypochaeroides* (Cat's-ear Hawkweed), *Viola hirta* (Hairy violet) and *Cynoglossum officinale* (Hound's-tongues).

On Friday, a party went to Fenn's Moss to be led by the extremely well-informed and inspirational Joan Daniels, warden at this SSSI. Here Arthur Chater determined two firsts: *Betula pubescens* subsp. *tortuosa* (Downy Birch) as a new vice-county record and the rare *Carex elongata* (Elongated Sedge) as a new site record. Also recorded were *Betula x aurata* (*B. pendula* x *B. pubescens*), *Rubus scissus* (Bramble), *Potamogeton polygonifolius* (Bog Pondweed), *Pulicaria dysenterica* (Common Fleabane), *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* (Cowberry), *Andromeda polifolia* (Bog-



**Image 4:** Kate Thorne's Rose exhibit, highlighting key characters. Photo: John Crellin.

rosemary), *Drosera rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Sundew) and, thanks to Jonathan Shanklin, many more.

Jean Green and Sarah Stille led an intrepid group over the magnificent Cors-Maen Llwyd. Here are Sarah's comments:

Under a grey and threatening sky, several delegates to the Welsh AGM made their way to Cors-Maen Llwyd at the north end of Llyn Brenig to look for the many characteristic plants of this fine upland bog. The many sedges included *Carex echinata* (Star Sedge), *C. canescens* [*C. curta*] (White Sedge), *C. panicea* (Carnation Sedge), *C. pilulifera* (Pill Sedge), *C. pulicaris* (Flea Sedge), *C. nigra* (Common Sedge), *C. dioica* (Dioecious Sedge), *C. demissa* (Yellow Sedge), *C. x fulva* (Hybrid Sedge), and perhaps *C. hostiana* (Tawny Sedge) itself [although it was too young to be sure]. We also found *Triglochin palustris* (Marsh Arrowgrass), *Menyanthes trifoliata* (Bogbean), *Potentilla palustris* (Marsh Cinquefoil) and the common *Juncus* species of this type of

habitat. The star of the morning was undoubtedly the rare hybrid *Carex x gaudiniana* (*C. dioica* x *C. echinata*), which was found in quantity in several parts of the bog.

Returning to the cars for lunch, several people decided to set off homeward, so only half the group went on to the visitors' car park on the north-east shore. Here a small inlet of the reservoir is sheltered enough to contain plenty of *Potamogeton natans* (Broad-leaved Pondweed), an abundance of *Apium inundatum* (Lesser Marshwort) and an area of *Eleocharis palustris* (Common Spike-rush). There was not much more to find except for some alarmed breeding sandpipers and a motley collection of ducks and Canada Geese, so the rainy day was finally abandoned around 3pm, and everyone set off home. Unfortunately, although the weather was not as challenging as this over both days at all the sites, it was certainly disappointing for June. But there again, for those of us who live locally, we know that it could quite easily have been a great deal worse!

## Exhibits shown at the 2012 Exhibition Meeting

**Ian Bonner.** *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting, Edafeddog y Mynydd) on Anglesey (v.c.52).

**Ian Bonner.** *Euphorbia cyparissias* (Cypress Spurge, Llaethlys Cypreswydd) on Anglesey (v.c.52).

**Anne Daly.** *Erigeron annuus* (Tall Fleabane) in Worcestershire (v.c.37) and Staffordshire (v.c.39): is this recorded in Wales?

**Natasha De Vere.** *Inspirational Botanists Women of Wales* an exhibit prepared by the library volunteers at the National Botanic Garden of Wales and students of Coleg Sir Gar.

**Polly Spencer-Velacott.** *Sibthorpia europaea* (Cornish Moneywort)—a Welsh update.

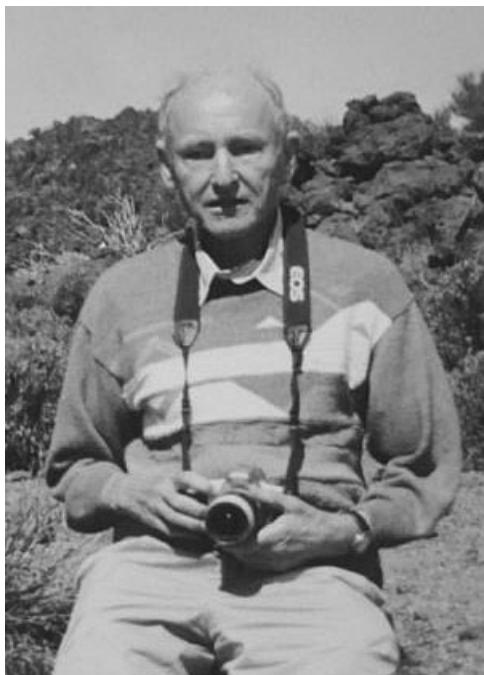
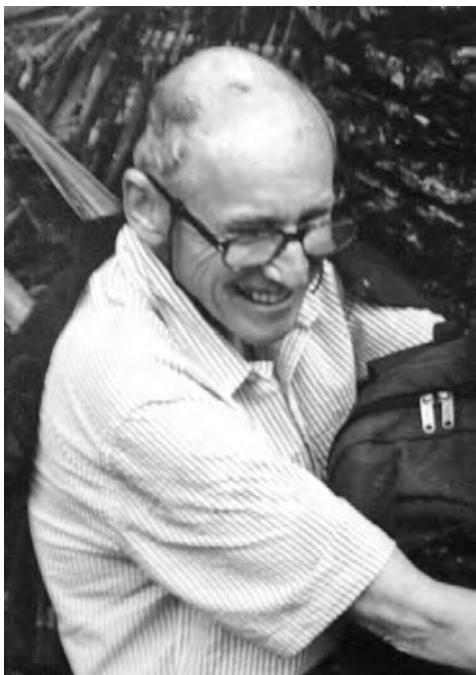
**Polly Spencer-Velacott.** BSBI Wales Christmas/greetings card competition.

**Martyn Stead.** *Vicia orobus* (Wood Bitter-vetch) a recording meeting at Nebo, Denbighshire (v.c.50), 17th June 2012.

**Kate Thorne.** Exhibit and workshop on Roses with table of key characters provided by Graeme Kay.

**Kate Thorne.** *Carex rostrata*, *C. acuta*, *C. elata*, *C. vesicaria*, *C. riparia* and *C. acutiformis* specimens for comparison.

## Tony (A.J.E.) Smith 1935-2012



I am sad to tell you that Tony (A.J.E.) Smith has died in hospital at the age of 77.

After a D Phil at Oxford where he worked on the taxonomy of *Melampyrum* (Cow-wheats), Tony lectured at Swansea University. He then went to Bangor University where he became Reader in Botany in addition to becoming an external examiner at the University of Reading.

He retired early in 1999 to look after his wife, Ruth, in her last illness.

He wrote the first bryophyte floras of the British Isles for almost 80 years (for liverworts) and over 50 years (for mosses). A

second edition of his Moss Flora of Britain and Ireland was published in 2004.

After Ruth's death in 2000 Tony travelled widely, mostly on botanical tours, and cultivated his beautiful garden where he had an impressive collection of *Pelargoniums* among other treasures.

Tony was a quiet, gentle and almost reclusive man and he was a kind and generous friend. He helped me enormously when I was doing an MSc in 2005. His friends will miss him very much.

Sarah Stille, *BSBI Recorder for Merioneth*

## ***Gagea lutea* – a new site for Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem in Denbighshire (v.c.50)**

POLLY SPENCER-VELLACOTT, *Somerset Cottage, Chester Rd, Penyffordd, CHESTER, Flintshire, CH4 0LD*

*Gagea lutea* (Yellow star-of-Bethlehem) (see image 10, inside back cover) is not a scarce plant in England, but is classed as Endangered on the Welsh Red Data List - with one known native population. This population (in Denbighshire, near Llanarmon-yn-Ial) has been known for some decades, along with another approximately 1km away, which is on private land. Delyth Williams (vice-county recorder for Denbighshire) and I were able to visit the latter in March 2012, and saw a number of flowering plants - although many appeared to have had the flowers bitten off (perhaps by pheasants?). Flowering is known to vary from year to year (Foley, 1994), but Delyth was disappointed to see far fewer plants and none in some outlying patches compared to a visit she had made with Jean Green (her predecessor as vice-county recorder) in 2009. This site is mostly in a depression between limestone outcrops, shaded by *Fraxinus excelsior* (Ash) and *Corylus avellana* (Hazel). The main associate is *Ficaria verna* (Lesser Celandine).

The following day Delyth phoned me again to say that by a startling coincidence she had just heard from Jean, of another population of *Gagea lutea*, not far away, near Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd (but in a new hectad). I spoke to Jean, and a week later I was able to visit the site with the owner, who has known about it for some 20 years, although she may not have seen flowers every year. Only one flower, partly gone over, was visible, but also large numbers of small narrow leaves. I believe these were *Gagea* leaves, as the occasional wider leaves amongst them had

the characteristic ribs on the underside. The woodland here was more disturbed than that at the Llanarmon-yn-Ial site and was dominated by *Acer pseudoplatanus* (Sycamore) with mixed species including *Corylus avellana* and some *Picea* sp. (spruce). The ground flora was heavily dominated by *Allium ursinum* (Ransoms).

Interestingly, this small patch of limestone woodland (an area between fields and the farmyard, with small outcrops) has been used by a young boy who rides a toy quad bike around, and it now appears that the disturbance of creating a small track may have stimulated or exposed some seeds or bulbils, which have grown up in dense patches - and are now being protected with chicken-wire! It appears that one of the threats may be competition from *Allium ursinum*, which has been suppressed by the clearance. The owner is now talking about carrying out a little limited clearance of *Allium ursinum* in places where *Gagea* has not been seen for several years, to see if the same process can be stimulated. At the Llanarmon-yn-Ial site the largest patch of *Gagea* was found in an area that was undoubtedly trampled occasionally by cattle and/or sheep, where *Allium ursinum* was only occasional. However, the pastures are not heavily grazed. In adjacent ungrazed areas of woodland with dense *Allium ursinum* we saw no evidence of *Gagea*.

This fortunate lady is also the owner of one of the most beautiful woods I have seen for a while - dominated by Ash around limestone outcrops but with a beautiful ground flora of

*Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Common Bluebell), *Anemone nemorosa* (Wood Anemone), *Viola odorata* (White Violet) and *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* (Wild Daffodil). It is almost impossible to be certain of the purity of the daffodils, as cultivated types have been planted around nearby houses, but it is certainly a beautiful sight. No *Gagea* here, although we did find some similarly narrow bright green leaves, but it seemed more likely that they belonged to the bluebells or Wild Daffodils.

Meanwhile, *Gagea lutea* remains an elusive hidden gem. This brings the hectad records in Denbighshire from one to two. There is an unverified record in Cardiff (perhaps an error for *Ornithogalum* sp. (Star-of-Bethlehem), and several in Radnorshire held by the local records centre. However, it is not thought to

be native in Radnorshire and these may also be errors. The typical habitat is said to be moist base-rich woodlands and shady river banks – the first population is, at 300m, one of the highest altitudes known in Britain. Why *Gagea* is so rare in Wales is a matter for speculation. It is widespread (though not common) in England and in western and central Europe. Are there temperature requirements which are not met in our western climate or could it be under-recorded in more of Wales' base-rich woodlands, where it is only visible very early in the year, a reluctant flowerer, and easily overlooked when not flowering?

## Reference

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## Green-winged Orchids *Anacamptis morio* in Monmouthshire (v.c.35)

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Evans (2007a) listed 15 sites all in eastern Monmouthshire where *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid) had been found, although some of these were sites where the species had not been seen for many years, for example Caerwent quarry in ST4789. This was in contrast to Wade (1970) finding it to be frequent in all districts. In T.G.Evans's Rare Plants Register (2007b) only nine extant sites were given for *A. morio*.

In early 2012 one of us (S.J.Tyler), searched all available published reports and also data held by Gwent Wildlife Trust (GWT) and the BSBI and Monmouthshire Meadows Group

(MMG) for the presence of this species and listed 30 sites where the species had been recorded in the recent past (within 40 years).

In late April and May we searched all the sites and counted the number of *A. morio* flowering spikes (see image 3 on inside front cover), noting details of the surrounding vegetation and associated species as requested in the BSBI instructions for recording threatened plants (see image 5, p14 and image 7, p18). We also requested any sightings of this species through a newsletter of Monmouthshire Meadows Group and general requests.

## Results

Green-winged Orchids were found at 20 sites, many of them on sandstone of the Trellech Plateau and slopes between Penallt and Devauden at altitudes from 130m to 250m. Outliers occurred at lower altitudes near Monmouth and at Newcastle. Others were found at three sites on limestone at altitudes of 30 to 60m in the southeast of the vice-county. Table 1 (on page 16) shows the counts at each site. Some sites were visited twice because orchids were only just appearing on the first visit. At a few sites especially at the privately owned New Grove Farm fields and the Gwent Wildlife Trust's New Grove Meadows the counts will be minima as 12 volunteers were available on 6th May to help count at this important site

whereas a week or two later more flowers were evident (Jon Dunkelman, pers. comm.).

New sites have been found since 2005 including four sites at Penallt - Lone Lane pastures, Moorcroft Cottage fields, lawns scattered through the village and another field near the war memorial at Penallt. Gwent Wildlife Trust and MMG surveys from 2006 to 2011 located the species at six other 'new' sites – Hill meadows at Killgwrwg, Walnut Tree Cottage at Tregagle, Ty Uchaf at Cwmcarvan, Pennysylvania Farm near Shirenewton and two adjacent smallholdings at Llanishen. In 2012, single flowering spikes of *A. morio* were found at only three of the six sites. Julian Branscombe also found a small number on the slip road to Usk from the A449 in 2008 where they have persisted



**Image 5:** Surveying *Anacamptis morio* in Monmouthshire (v.c.35). Photo: Keith Moseley 2012

Site	Grid reference	Year when first seen	No. of flowers seen in 2012
New Grove Meadows incl.	SO500073		
New Grove Farm and GWT reserve	SO501067/71	1980	4842
Fernlea, Star Hill, Devauden	SO475016/5	1980	2360
Pentwyn and Bush Meadows GWT	SO524093	1978	1556 + 76
Brockwells Farm, Caerwent GWT	ST468897	1960-2012	381
Lawns of houses in Penallt	SO518089	2011	260
Moorcroft Cottage, Penallt	SO51780930	2009	220
Lower Nex Meadows, Kilgwrrg	ST47919800	1991	116
Shirefield, Caerwent	ST46588969	2004	108
Yew Tree Cottage pasture	SO528021	2008	24
Wyesham/Kymin	SO5227712029	1995	6-12
Penyvan	SO52340583	1989	14
Newcastle	SO44861769	2010	10
Usk slip road	SO39790081	2008	7
Penallt War Memorial field	SO52130921	2012	3
Five Lanes Field	ST4468990148	2012	3
Tregagle near Penallt	SO52280807	2007	1
The Hill, Kilgwrrg	ST47449832	2005	1
Tymawr Covent, Lydart, Penallt	SO50570787	Early 1990s	1
Ty Uchaf, Cwmcarvan	SO4773605847	2009	1
Five Acres, Maryland	SO519058	2012	1
Pennsylvania Farm, Shirenewton	ST463951	2006	0
Llanishen Far Hill 2 sites	SO474039		
	SO472038	2005	0
Slough Farm, Usk	SO409008	2006 (possible)	0
Walnut Tree Cottage, Five Lanes	ST449906	2007	0
MOD Caerwent	ST465915/8	1996-1999	0
MOD Caerwent	ST485915	1988-1992	0
MOD Caerwent	ST466918	1996	0
Bishton	ST3887	1990	?
Tintern	SO5309	1988	0
The Narth	SO525066	1987	0
Caerwent quarry	ST4789	1973	0
Cobblers Plain SSSI	SO475013	1995	0
West of Bigsnap Wood	SO533053	1989-91	0
Lawn at Mounton Road in Chepstow	ST5293	1991-1993	0

**Table 1.** Counts at all known sites in May 2012, ordered by size of population

to 2012. Another new site was found in 2012 by Julian Woodman and Rob Bacon at Five Lanes. A possible *Anacamptis morio* flowering spike was found by GWT at Slough Farm near Usk in 2006. In July 2012, a house-owner showed S.J.Tyler a photograph of a single spike that had appeared on a lawn at Maryland near Trellech.

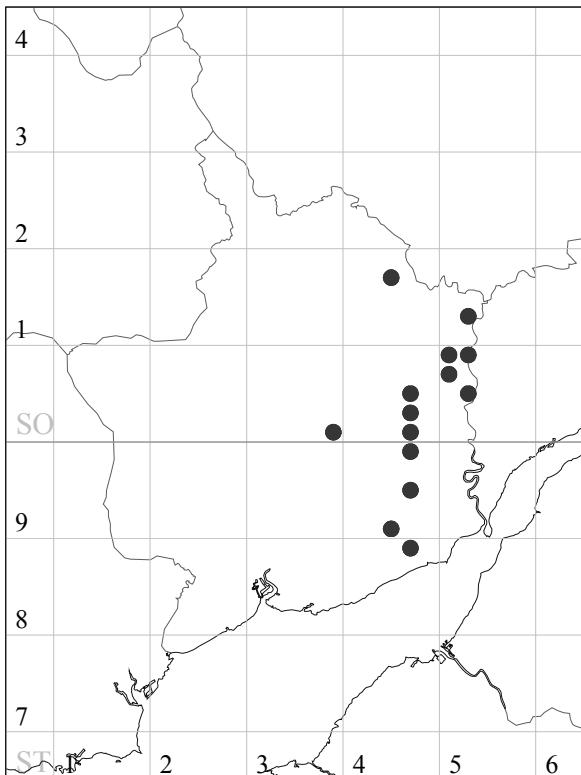
In 2012 a number of sites drew blank results. Two adjacent properties at Llanishen had up to 20 orchids in 2006 (GWT) but none were found in 2012 despite extensive searches and discussions with the two landowners. Sites at Tintern, The Narth and at Slough Farm near Usk were surveyed in 2012 but none were found. Most disappointing was the extensive limestone grasslands at MOD Dinham, Caerwent where three former sites were known (Evans, 2007). On the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012

T.G.Evans, Elsa and Adrian Wood and S.J.Tyler spent a day at the MOD base searching the sites where the species had previously been recorded but to no avail.

#### Grazing pressure

A new site found on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2012 at Five Lanes near Caerwent had three spikes (J.Woodman & R.Bacon, pers. comm.) but a week later the plants had disappeared when T.G.Evans and S.J.Tyler searched for them. Likewise at a site at Wyesham near Monmouth 10-12 flowering spikes were reported on a lawn but when S.J.Tyler visited all she could find were flower stalks nibbled off at 2-3cm above the ground. Four plants scattered in a 6 acre field all disappeared over the next two weeks and at some other sites one or more plants disappeared after they were initially seen and rabbits, cattle

**Image 6:** Distribution map of *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid) in Monmouthshire (v.c.35)



and Fallow Deer were all suspects.

At MOD Caerwent, brambles and scrub had encroached on one former area; rabbit pressure may have been responsible for the nil counts at others. The SSSI hay meadows on the MOD property however, looked ideal with a range of species, notably abundant *Primula veris* (Cowslips).

#### Annual fluctuations

Only three sites held in excess of 1000 flowering spikes: Two of these were large sites - four fields at GWT's New Grove Meadows, six fields at GWT's Pentwyn Farm and adjacent Bush Farm and a private site on Star Hill between Llanishen and Devauden. The last site held the highest density recorded.

From 100 to 500 were seen at five more sites whilst the remainder of sites held from one to 24 spikes. Of particular note were the populations on lawns of houses built in the

late 1970s/early 1980s on species-rich grassland at Penallt. One lawn held over 230 flowering spikes although a former landowner who allowed the lawn to first grow as a meadow had no record of *A. morio* (Chery Cummings, pers. comm.). Other lawns in the development held from single to 12 flowering spikes.

At two sites where detailed botanical surveys had been carried out in the 1990s and early 2000s, one or two Green-winged Orchids first appeared in 2007 and 2008 respectively. By 2012 the first site held 24 whilst the second site had 220. At Pentwyn Farm and at New Grove GWT bought some adjacent semi-improved meadows in the late 1990s and early 2000s to add to these two reserves. These semi-improved meadows have progressively become more species-rich and Green-winged Orchids have spread well onto them. The highest count at New Grove on 6<sup>th</sup> May came from one of the semi-improved fields, where in 1997 no Green-winged



**Image 7:** Surveying *Anacamptis morio* in Monmouthshire (v.c.35) Photo: Keith Moseley 2012

**Table 2.** Percentage cover of most frequent associates in 25 quadrats on MG5 grassland**% Species**

- 100 *Anthoxanthum odoratum* (Sweet Vernal-grass)  
 96 *Plantago lanceolata* (Lanceolate Plantain)  
 88 *Hypochaeris radicata* (Catsear)  
 84 *Luzula campestris* (Field Wood-rush), *Lotus corniculatus* (Birdsfoot Trefoil) & *Festuca rubra* (Red Fescue)  
 80 *Ranunculus bulbosus* (Bulbus Buttercup)  
 76 *Rhinanthus minor* (Yellow Rattle)  
 68 *Taraxacum* agg (Dandelions) & *Trifolium pratense* (Red Clover)  
 60 *Centaurea nigra* (Common Knapweed) & *Ranunculus acris* (Meadow Buttercup)  
 52 *Agrostis capillaris* (Common Bent), *Holcus lanatus* (Yorkshire Fog) and *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted Orchid)  
 48 *Primula veris* (Cowslip) and *Heracleum sphondylium* (Common Hogweed)  
 40 *Leucanthemum vulgare* (Oxeye Daisy)  
 36 *Leontodon hispidus* (Rough Hawkbit)

Orchids were found (Jon Winder, pers. comm.), rather than on the original two species-rich 'orchid' meadows. Possibly numbers were suppressed on some of the GWT fields as harrowing had unfortunately occurred in late April.

Associated species and sward height

Sites at Five Lanes, Shirefield and Brockwells Farm all overlie limestone whereas all other sites are on Old Red Sandstone and neutral to slightly acidic soils with MG5 vegetation. At the time of the survey, vegetation height was generally less than 10cm. The most frequently found associates in the MG5 grassland are shown in table 2, above. Some 26 other species were recorded in the quadrats. Bryophytes were frequent components in quadrats with *Rhytidadelphus squarrosus* (Springy Turf-moss) and *Pseudoscleropodium purum* (Neat Feather-moss) the most abundant species. On the limestone sites the associated species were similar but *Festuca rubra* (Red Fescue) and *Briza media* (Quaking-grass) were the

most frequent grasses noted and other species appeared in the quadrats such as *Poterium sanguisorba* (Salad Burnet).

**Acknowledgements**

We thank Adrian and Elsa Wood and many members of Monmouthshire Meadows Group for help with surveys and some counts. We also thank numerous landowners who allowed us access and showed an interest in the counts especially Pam Lloyd, Jan Noirit, Tessa Murray, Wally Keeler, Rosemary Howell, Jessica King, Sue Clode, Vera and Geoffrey Easton and the Gwent Wildlife Trust.

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# **Autumn Gentians *Gentianella amarella* similar to ssp. *septentrionalis* in Anglesey**

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Autumn Gentians *Gentianella amarella*, resembling sub-species *septentrionalis* have been found on part of Twyyn Trewan dunes, near Rhosneigr, Anglesey (v.c.52). In Britain the distinctive northern sub-species *Gentianella amarella* ssp. *septentrionalis* (Druce) N.M.Pritchard, occurs most frequently on the north coast of Scotland and northern isles, with some as far south as the limestone uplands of the Pennines, but it has not been recorded in Wales or Ireland (BSBI, n.d.).

In bud, the flowers of the Anglesey plants that are like ssp. *septentrionalis* are creamy yellow, the corolla lobes being white on top when open and there is an obvious reddish blush on the outer side of the corolla tubes (see image 9 on inside back cover). The main stems and pedicels are reddish brown, while the leaves are paler than usual for ssp. *amarella*. The calyx lobes are slightly uneven in length and internodes number five or, less commonly, six. Overall, they appear similar to ssp. *septentrionalis* photographed on dunes on the north coast of Scotland and at Lindisfarne (Farmer, n.d. & Llewellyn, 2012).

Atypical white and very pale gentians had been seen before at Tywyn Trewan but, in early August 2010, at a different spot, we came across 30-40 small gentians with creamy white flowers and the characterising reddish blush on the corolla tubes. Similar plants occurred at precisely the same location in 2011 and searches on 12<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> July 2012 gave counts of at least 210 of them.

Most were in a patch only about 15m x 3m at SH31217425. As well as their colours, they share some morphological characters with ssp. *septentrionalis*; they mainly flower 2-3 weeks earlier than the peak here for ssp. *amarella* and have repeatedly occurred in a discrete patch. However, it is unknown whether these cream gentians arose locally from colour variations in ssp. *amarella* or really do belong to the northern sub-species, having arrived in Anglesey fairly recently.

Tim Rich, who has been preparing the draft of a BSBI Handbook on the *Gentianaceae*, came to see them but was not willing to confirm either scenario, though commenting that if it were Shetland they would be called spp. *septentrionalis* (Tim Rich, pers. comm.). With opinions currently varying on the status of several taxa within a broad *G. amarella* sensu lato, perhaps someone using DNA methods can throw light on the questions?

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## Anglesey Plants in 2012

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The weather will doubtless be mentioned in many reports about 2012 – this will be no exception! Since June the general lack of sunshine and low temperatures, coupled with rain, have been a talking point. Rainfall figures for Treborth Botanic Garden, Bangor for June (5.6 inches), July (4.3 inches), August (4.1 inches), September (6.5 inches), October (5.9 inches) and November (7.2 inches) bear this out.

However the first Anglesey Flora Group meeting, on 22<sup>nd</sup> May to Aberffraw, was under very different conditions – the dune annuals were shrivelling in the sunshine and the dune slacks were worryingly dry. We failed to find either of our target species, *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting) and *Hypochaeris glabra* (Smooth Cat's-ear); but were rewarded with plentiful fronds of *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort) - over 100 at SH360.682 for example. Also a very small quantity of *Scilla verna* (Spring Squill) at SH364.684 – surprisingly unrecorded from most dune sites in comparison with its great abundance on rocky outcrops round the Anglesey coast.

Our meeting, as part of the Cemlyn 'Bioblitz' on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, failed to take place with the cancellation of the whole event on the Sunday due to the stormy conditions.

On 26<sup>th</sup> June we spent a wet, but rewarding day recording between Llangefni and the Cefni reservoir in SH44.76 and 45.76, refinding *Carex acuta* (Slender Tufted-sedge) in several places along the Afon Cefni, from where it has been known since at least 1895. The only other known Anglesey locality is from around Llyn Dinam, SH31.77.

On 14<sup>th</sup> August Ian Hawkins lead us round part of the RSPB Malltraeth Marsh reserve to look at how plants are responding to the creation of a number of shallow water bodies. Most impressive was the response of the nationally threatened fern ally *Pilularia globulifera* (Pillwort) which was locally abundant in recently created shallow pools in SH45.71 & 46.72. Also responding well was the nationally vulnerable *Oenanthe fistulosa* (Tubular Water-dropwort), near threatened *Baldellia ranunculoides* (Lesser Water-plantain) and county scarce species like *Apium inundatum* (Lesser Marshwort), *Elatine hexandra* (Six-stamened Waterwort) and *Hottonia palustris* (Water Violet).

The two final meetings were to make basic lists for some under-recorded grid squares. On 11<sup>th</sup> September we visited an area below Llangwylog church, SH43.79 and around Wilpol, Llanerchymedd, SH39.84 & 40.84, both courtesy of Brian Thomas. On 6<sup>th</sup> October we visited the Llanddaniel area, SH49.70, 49.71 & 50.71. After which we were very kindly entertained to tea at nearby Tyddyn Adda by James and Joanna Robertson. Although no special habitats were encountered, nor special species noted, between 130 -150 taxa were recorded from each grid square – demonstrating the value of several pairs of eyes!

Returning to *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting) – we did visit all the Anglesey sites with post 2000 records – there are only 4 of them - and completed Threatened Plant Population forms. At Cors Erddreiniog, SH47.82 & 47.83, and Bryn Offa, SH57.81, the very small populations produced no flowers in 2012. At Fedw Fawr, SH60.82 the small patch produced 28 flowers – all female.

There are two populations on Cors Goch, SH49.81 & 50.81, and only at the larger one were there any male flowers. During this winter the National Trust are planning some management at Bryn Offa to improve the habitat for this species. In the 1980's there were Mountain Everlasting records from 11 other locations, mainly limestone grass and heath; but also sand dunes at Aberffraw. Information about any other locations would be very welcome.

Counts of numbers of some of the other scarcer species continue to be carried out. In June the RSPB looked at the known localities of *Tuberaria guttata* (Spotted Rockrose) on Holyhead Mountain and recorded 2885 plants (flowering & non-flowering) at 7 of the 11 known locations. Numbers of this annual plant vary from year to year, from, for example, only a few hundred in 2007 to nearly 6000 in 2002.

The National Trust continued to count *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly Orchid) at Plas Newydd, SH51.69, with the total of c.65 flower spikes considerably less than the 100 plus of 2011.

Inadvertently missed from 2011's report is Geoff Radford's find of *Parentucellia viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia) on the edge of the Wylfa Head LNR. When I visited in July 2011 there were about 200 flowering plants scattered over some 12m. x 10m. of grassland at SH353.942. Has anyone noticed it in 2012? The only other Anglesey sighting was by Richard Birch in 2004, when he noted it on a bank of the recently constructed A55, near Valley, SH30.79.

A 2009 record that only came to light this year is of the very welcome rediscovery of *Carex pallescens* (Pale Sedge) by the CCW Lowland Peatland team, from a small area of fen meadow at Llyn Hafodol SSSI, SH39.88. This always seems to have been rare plant on

Anglesey, with only two other records dating from 1970 and 1983.

This November Peter and Owain Jones discovered a new locality for *Huperzia selago* (Fir Clubmoss) (see image 11 on back cover) on Mynydd Bodafon, SH47.85. This, another rare species on Anglesey, is only known otherwise from the heathland at Fedw Fawr, SH60.81. Until 1958 it was known from the nearby heathland at Rhoslligwy, SH48.85, until 1959 there were records from Llaniestyn Common, Llanddona, SH58.79, and at least until 2005, a small colony could be found on one of the rocky outcrops in Newborough Forest, SH40.62.

Not only has Ivor Rees continued his interest in members of the gentian family (see his article about unusual Autumn Gentians on the sand dunes at Rhosneigr page 20); but he has this year been trying to understand the bindweeds (*Calystegia* species) on Anglesey. Ivor has reconfirmed *Calystegia sepium* subsp. *roseata*, the pink form of Hedge Bindweed, at its only Anglesey location on Penrhosfeilw Common, SH22.79, where it extends over 50m along the transition between the dry heath and adjacent mire. He has found the first site for *Calystegia pulchra* (Hairy Bindweed) (see image 12 on back cover), with pink and white striped flowers and characteristic wavy edged wing to the flower stalk, from near Llangoed SH61.80. Ivor also found *Calystegia x lucana*, the hybrid between the native *C. sepium* (Hedge Bindweed) and the introduced *C. silvatica* (Large Bindweed), recognising it from several locations scattered across the island. Ivor has just heard from RK Brummitt, the referee for *Convolvulaceae*, that he confirms these determinations.

First records of other introductions in 'the wild' include *Verbena bonariensis* (Argentinian Vervain) from the outskirts of Beaumaris, SH60.76, noted by Ted Phenna.

## Penpergwm Pond Update

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An article in issue 89 of the Welsh Bulletin (Jones *et. al.* 2012) on *Persicaria mitis* (Tasteless Water-pepper) contained what I consider to have been an ill-considered remark when it stated that “*a large population of Persicaria minor was found here [at Penpergwm Pond] where it had not been recorded earlier, indicating either significant oversight or wider changes in the native species assemblage*”.

Penpergwm Pond (SO325098) was first notified as a SSSI in 1971, re-affirmed in 1985 and according to the article still has that status today.

The most notable of my first records at the pond made in June 1975, were *Apium inundatum* (Lesser Marshwort), *Alopecurus aequalis* (Orange Foxtail), *Carex vesicaria* (Bladder-sedge) and *Menyanthes trifoliata* (Bogbean). It wasn’t until 1985 after I started my scheme to map the flora of v.c.35 by tetrads that I separated *Persicaria mitis* from *P. hydropiper* (Water-pepper). Since 1975, I have visited the site at least once every year, often with different botanists, until this millennium. After the late nineties however, my visits to the pond were less frequent due to access difficulties.

At least from when I first recorded its plants in 1975 the pond’s water level was always high and the plants in its water and around its margin varied little from year to year. This was until 2003, when Colin Titcombe and I found that the water had receded to a much smaller area just east of the pond’s original centre. For the first time we were able to walk into the central area. We found out the cause of this dramatic fall in water level when we walked around to the east side and

found tons of excavated soil and stones dumped high upon the bank and the tracks of a large mechanical digger from the pond driven over the site of *Persicaria mitis* (although we did find a small number of this plant on the edge of where the water had been).

We then searched for *Apium inundatum* (its only natural site in Monmouthshire (v.c. 35)) in the pond’s south-west corner where cattle came to drink, and found five plants surviving. Visits since 2003 have shown that after dry spells the water level drops considerably, probably because the activity of the heavy digger has broken the seal of this dew-pond. The *Apium* hasn’t been seen since our 2003 visit and the rest of the vegetation is now subject to changes not seen before. This has been noticeable in the Bur-marigold family *Bidens cernua* (Nodding Bur-marigold), *B. frondosa* (Beggarticks) and *B. tripartita* (Trifid Bur-marigold), both in numbers of plants and their positions. I don’t remember seeing the former two species recently.

So, was permission to deepen the pond sought? Apparently the management was carried out to reduce colonising scrub, thus making the pond more attractive to ducks (the pond is managed by a shooting syndicate) but little concern appears to have been shown for the well-being of the plants. I have personally never seen shooters by the pond, although the pond is used for shooting in winter and piles of grain are put-out to attract wildfowl.

In July 1991, I organised the Welsh BSBI AGM at Peter Carpenter’s Caer Llan field centre and for one of my field meetings I

took members to Penpergwm Pond. Were they also guilty of “significant oversight” in not spotting “*a large population of Persicaria minor?*” I believe it is more likely the plants weren’t there then, indicating, as the article alternatively suggests that there were “*wider changes in the native species assemblage*”.

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Jones, A., Woodman, J.P. & Spencer-Vellacott, P. (2012). A Sample of *Persicaria mitis* (Tasteless Waterpepper) Sites in Wales. *BSBI Welsh Bulletin* Issue 89 pages 27-29.

# ***Galium murale* (Yellow Wall Bedstraw) at Fishguard ferryport**

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While bored waiting to catch the ferry at Fishguard ferryport, back to Ireland on 28 December 2011, I noticed that there was a very small *Galium*-like plant between the joints in the bricks used to pave the road (see image 8 on inside back cover). I could not make up my mind whether I was looking at a *Galium* (Bedstraws) or *Sherardia arvensis* (Field Madder). Deciding it was not the latter, I tried the task of removing a couple to grow on in my garden. I killed a few plants before managing to remove two with roots to take home.

The two plants survived despite being dug up by the rabbits as well as being nibbled by them on numerous occasions. By June, they had grown enough to try and identify which *Galium* they were. At first, I thought I had *G. parisiense* (Wall Bedstraw). Not satisfied that I had named it correctly, I had a look in various books. A book I had on plants of Israel had many diagrams, I soon established I had *G. murale* (Yellow Wall Bedstraw). A specimen was sent to Rodney Burton, the BSBI referee, who agreed on my identification.

*G. murale* is an annual with slender stems 5-

20 cm, which are mainly from the base. Leaves in whorls of 4-6, are 1-8 mm x 1-2 mm, oblong-lanceolate flat with mucronate apex and tapering base with margin with stiff forward pointing hairs. Flowers are single or in pairs in the leaf axils, tiny, 1 mm wide, greenish to yellow corolla. Fruits are 1.5-2 mm, 2 lobed cylindrical mericarps, which become arcuate when ripe, with spreading hooked hairs.

This is the first record for Wales. I have only been able to trace four other records for the British Isles: Edinburgh 1911/16, Lostwithiel, Cornwall as a pavement weed in 2007, as a pavement/gutter weed at Brighton, East Sussex in 2011/12 and from Newport, Isle of Wight in January 2012.

Rodney Burton told me that this is the best established population in the UK. There were 1000s of plants, stretching from where the cars board the ferry until the ferry port road joins the main road. Here, the surface changes from bricks to the usual tarmac.

I have not had any luck yet having the *Galium* as a first record for Ireland at Rosslare ferryport.

# Merioneth (v.c.48) Report 2012

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It has been another busy and demanding year. One landmark was setting up the blog <http://merioneth48.blogspot.co.uk> and then there was our first Merioneth Residential at Caerdeon in July. This was a very happy and successful meeting over four days, when three or four enthusiastic groups set off each day in different directions, according to their inclinations and energies. We added over 3000 records to the database at tetrad resolution or better. We welcomed several local people as non-residents and hope to see as many in 2013 when Caerdeon will run earlier, from 28-31 May.

We have had a full programme of Merioneth Nats meetings, starting in January when only Jacky Langton and I braved the winter conditions at Trawsfynydd and we made 65 records, including *Leycesteria formosa* (Himalayan Honeysuckle), as a first hectad record. This wasn't recorded for the 1962 Atlas so we don't know how much it is spreading.

Throughout the year we held a field meeting each month. Perhaps our most species-rich one was at Pont Croesor near Penrhyneddraeth. As well as a full and interesting list we saw literally dozens of plants of *Carum verticillatum* (Whorled Caraway) an uncommon plant for which the site is famous. Other outings were to Cwm Hesgyn on the Migneint, the dunes at Aberdyfi, Nant Pasgan above Maentwrog, and a bryophyte meeting at Andrew

Graham's farm at Trawscoed. Our last meeting in 2012, in the RSPB's Coed y Parc, had to be cancelled as the gales made being in a wood seriously dangerous.

It is amazing how many plants can be recorded in the depths of winter. Heather and I were alone for the October meeting when we made over 100 records including a native vice-county 'first', *Ceratophyllum demersum* (Hornwort), in the ditches below Harlech. Jacky and I rounded off the year with the wettest day of all above Maentwrog, but we still managed over 70 species - and survived a thorough soaking!

Sadly Rod Gritten, who was recently confirmed by BSBI Records Committee as Joint Vice-county Recorder, finds that his consultancy work is making greater demands on his time than originally anticipated, so has reluctantly had to resign the recordership.

This means that I am now alone at the sharp end and so contributions are even more welcome than ever. Altogether almost 7,500 records were added to the county database in 2012, over 10% of our total list. I am really grateful to all the contributors whose hard work has made our recent record gathering so successful.

Thank you all.

### **Images on opposite page:**

**8:** *Gallium murale* (Yellow Wall Bedstraw) at Fishguard ferryport in Pembrokeshire (v.c.45).

Photo: Paul Green (see article, page 24)

**9:** Cream coloured Autumn Gentians *Gentianella amarella* similar to ssp. *septentrionalis* found on Anglesey (v.c.52). Photo: Ivor Rees (see article, page 20)

**10:** A new site for *Gagea lutea* (Yellow star-of-Bethlehem) in Denbighshire (v.c.50). Photo: Polly Spencer-Vellacott (see article, page 13)

### **Images on back cover :**

**11:** A new locality on Anglesey for *Huperzia selago* (Fir Club-moss). It was found by Peter and Owain Jones on Mynydd Bodafon, and is rare on Anglesey, it was known previously from only one other locality on the island. Photo: Peter Jones (see Anglesey Plants in 2012, pages 21-22)

**12:** The first site on Anglesey (v.c.52) for *Calystegia pulchra* (Hairy Bindweed) found by Ivor Rees With pink and white striped flowers and characteristic wavy edged wing to the flower stalk, from near Llangoed. Photo: Ivor Rees (see Anglesey Plants in 2012, pages 21-22)

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