



Irish Botanical News

No. 25 March 2015



Editor: Paul R. Green



Field meeting in
the Galty Mts.
8 June 2014.
Photo: S.
Reynolds ©
2014.

See page 52.



Vegetative *Equisetum telmateia* (Great Horsetail), unusually with a cone, near
Duntryleague, Co. Limerick, August 2014. Photo: S. Reynolds © 2014. See page 45.

The following is the Committee as elected at the Annual General Meeting at Hillyard House, Castlewellan, Co. Down on 13th September 2014. Office bearers were subsequently elected at the first committee meeting. Following the untimely death of Caoimhe Muldoon, John Conaghan has taken on the role of Field Secretary. Two further members were co-opted at the second Committee meeting. The Committee is now:

Dr J.S. Faulkner (Chairman and Irish Officer Steering Group)

Dr M. Sheehy Skeffington (Vice-Chair and Irish Officer Steering Group)

Mrs P. O'Meara (Hon. Secretary)

Mr R. H. Northridge (Hon. Treasurer, Atlas Planning Group and NI Representative on Records and Research Committee)

Mr J. Conaghan (Field Secretary)

Dr J. Denyer

The following are co-opted members of the committee:

Mr C. Breen

Dr R. Hodd

The following are nominated observers to the committee:

Mr M. Wright (Northern Ireland Environment Agency)

Dr M.B. Wyse Jackson (National Parks & Wildlife Service)

(Mr G. Sharkey is ROI Representative on Records and Research Committee, but not currently a member of CFI)

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Front cover photo: *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid). Photo: John Diggin © 2014. See page 18.

All species and common names in *Irish Botanical News* follow those in the database on the BSBI website <http://rbg-web2.rbge.org.uk/BSBI/> and Stace, C. (2010). *New Flora of the British Isles*, 3rd ed. Cambridge University, Cambridge.

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Editorial

This is the 25th edition of Irish Botanical News (IBN), which has gone from strength to strength over the years.

Issue No. 1 had a green jacket and a hand drawn picture on the front cover. Now there is a colour photo on the front and back covers and four pages in the centre of the journal also have colour photos.

One of the traditions of IBN has been the report by Tony O'Mahony on 'A report on the Flora of Cork (**H3-H5**)' which has appeared in every issue. I will miss the comments by readers of IBN as I would always hear how members enjoyed reading of Tony's rambles around Co. Cork, especially his updates each year on roses of the county. Tony has decided to hang up his clogs and step down as BSBI Vice-recorder for the three vice-counties that make up Co. Cork after forty years. It has been a pleasure receiving Tony's contributions for IBN, as I have made minor changes to the format since I took over as editor from Brian Rushton in 2009, Tony had picked up on them and incorporated them into his report, making very little editing for me.

Paul R. Green, Irish Botanical News

BSBI's main summer meeting to be on Irish North Coast

BSBI'S Annual Summer Meeting is coming to Ireland this year. Based at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, it will involve talks on the local flora, organised outings to sites along the spectacular north coast, and opportunities to do some recording for atlas 2020 in small groups in new terrain.

The meeting will start on the evening of Friday 12th June and run through to the afternoon of Tuesday 16th. These meetings are usually very well attended, so going along to Coleraine for this extended weekend will be a great opportunity for Irish botanists to meet other members of the Society. It will also be a good chance to appreciate the magnificent scenery of the Causeway Coast, and see some of the botanical specialities of its basalt and limestone cliffs, large dune systems, raised bogs, and atlantic woodlands.

We will be using student accommodation, which is good quality, but if you want even more comfort there are many hotels in the area. Details including booking forms will be posted on the Meetings and Irish pages of the BSBI website. They will also be included as a flyer with the next issue of BSBI News. Book early to secure your place!

John Faulkner

BSBI Irish field programme, 2015

These are dates for your diary only, full details are to be found in the BSBI Yearbook 2015 and on the BSBI website.

<p>Saturday 9th & Sunday 10th May Slieve Aughty Mountains, SE Galway (H15) Leader: Micheline Sheehy Skeffington</p>	<p>Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th July Lough Fern Area, West Donegal (H35) Leader: Ralph Sheppard</p>
<p>Saturday 16th May Curragh Chase Forest Park, Co. Limerick (H8) Leaders: Sylvia & Julian Reynolds</p>	<p>Saturday 11th & Sunday 12th July South-west Co. Cork (H3 & H4) Leaders: Fionnuala O'Neill & Edwina Cole</p>
<p>Saturday 6th June The Heath, Portlaoise, Co. Laois (H14) Leaders: Mark McCorry & Fiona McGowan</p>	<p>Saturday 25th July Streamstown, Co. Westmeath (H23) Leader: Con Breen</p>
<p>Friday 12th to Tuesday 16th June Ireland's North Coast (H39 & H40) Annual Summer Meeting Leaders: TBA</p>	<p>Tuesday 28th to Tuesday 4th August East & West Mayo (H26 & H27) Leader: Gerry Sharkey</p>
<p>Saturday 20th June Ballyhale Quarry, Ballyhale, Co. Kilkenny (H11) Leader: Roger Goodwillie</p>	<p>Friday 14th to Sunday 16th August Inishowen Peninsula, East Donegal (H34) Leaders: John Conaghan, Mairéad Crawford & Oisín Duffy</p>
<p>Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th June Cavan Town & Virginia, Co. Cavan (H30) Leader: Robert Northridge</p>	<p>Saturday 29th August Bangor Erris, West Mayo (H27) Leaders: Janice Fuller & John Conaghan</p>

Irish BSBI Members' Conference
25th April 2015 National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin
10.00-17.30

We hope to build on the success of last year's 50th anniversary conference (see photo page 35) and keep the enthusiasm and interest going. This year we will hold a one-day event. It will, again, be a great opportunity for BSBI recorders and members to get together, for people to learn about plant recording, interesting habitats and how to identify 'difficult' plant groups – and great for those who are curious about the BSBI to learn what we're about. As before, we welcome non-members, but would encourage them to join (€38/£30; can be done online at: <http://bsbi.org.uk/membership.html>).

The programme will comprise talks in the morning about habitats, species and plant recording and we hope to have 3-4 workshops repeated in two sessions in the afternoon. So everyone can attend two of the total on offer. There will be space for IDs and items of interest, so please bring specimens, photos, comments or queries!

The cost will be at most €20 (tbc) and includes two tea/coffees, but not meals; lunch is available in the Gardens' restaurant. NB, the place will be busy for the orchid fair that week-end. We hope people will come together informally for a meal nearby or in town that evening. If there is a demand, there may be a field excursion on Sunday 26th.

Please check Irish BSBI webpage <http://www.bsbi.org.uk/ireland.html> for details of payment and registration in due course. For any other enquiries, contact Micheline Sheehy Skeffington, Botany & Plant Science, NUI, Galway, Galway or email: micheline.sheehy@nuigalway.ie.

Irish Species Project – preparing for year two

John Faulkner, *Drumherriff Lodge, Orchard Road, Lough Gall, BT61 8JD*

The second year of the Irish Species Project (ISP) is upon us! The ISP is a 2year project so all remaining site visits should be completed this year.

Many thanks to all of you who have submitted your first-year records to Maria. The results are beginning to look interesting. For example, the range of host trees for *Lathraea squamaria* (Toothwort) looks to be remarkably

diverse. At least, *Lathraea* is relatively easy to find if you have a good idea of where to look and do so early enough in the season, but *Vaccinium oxycoccus* (Cranberry) can apparently take a lot of searching if it is only present in small quantities. *Carex pseudocyperus* (Cyperus Sedge) seems to thrive best on bare mud and ditch banks in partial shade. So far, it is too early to make judgements about whether each of the eight species have declined or not.

There are a few minor issues about the recording forms.

1. What if I don't know where to start looking within a hectad?

As might have been predicted, some of the pre-selected sites have proved difficult to locate. This is most likely to happen when all we were able to give you was a 2-figure (i.e. hectad) grid reference. Many of the records for Atlas 2000 were submitted in that way, so that is how they now appear in the Society's Distribution Database (DDb). We had hoped that most of you would hold more details about these records than was submitted, but it seems that is not always so. In such cases, any site at all for the chosen species within the appointed hectad will be OK - if you can find one. If you can't, do please send in a "null return" on a recording form and state on it how much searching you did.

2. What is the difference between a "substitute" and an "extra" site?

A "substitute" is a replacement for a pre-selected site, and must be within the same hectad (10km square). It is used quite rarely. You only use this category when the pre-selected site has been defined to tetrad (2km square) level or finer scale, but you cannot or do not wish to record it for some reason. If you can locate and record another site in that hectad, it is a "substitute" for the original one.

An "extra" site is in addition to, rather than instead of, any preselected sites. It may be within the same hectad or in a completely different one.

Please ring the relevant term in the box headed "circle site type".

3. Should I always use the comments box?

Yes, please do! Your comments are always worthwhile, they sometimes help to confirm doubts, and they are occasionally essential in helping us to interpret the data within the forms.

4. How do I make a null return?

If you locate the site but cannot find the target species, please fill in all the boxes on the form which relate to the site itself but not to the plants themselves. Circle the “zero” in the box for population size. Please also add the grid reference of the site under “site name”.

The ISP is already helping us to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the DDb. To get the most value out of it, however, we will require returns from every vice-county. So if you are a VCR, please plan your recording for 2015 so that it will take in any remaining ISP sites in your vice-county. And if you are not but would like to help, get in touch with the relevant VCR or with Maria (maria.long@bsbi.org).

Irish vice-county recorder vacancies

The Committee for Ireland is seeking 5 vice-county recorders (VCRs), where the existing recorders have indicated that they would like to retire. The vicecounties concerned are:

- H3** West Cork
- H4** Mid Cork
- H5** East Cork
- H24** Co. Longford
- H30** Co. Cavan

The three Cork vice-counties were previously covered by one recorder – a mammoth undertaking – but we think it would be more manageable if they were covered by three separate recorders.

Recorders are very important to the BSBI as they are the main channel of communication between the Society and “on the ground” recording activities. In some counties this is a coordinating role, validating and maintaining records, but in many Irish counties, it is more of a hands-on recording role. The immediate priorities for VCRs are to finish recording Irish Species Project sites, and complete the post-2000 recording for the 2020 Atlas.

The ideal is for the recorder to be an energetic botanist living in or close to the vice-county, with all-round competence in field identification and in handling databases and other computer applications. However, the ideal is

rarely realistic! It is, for example, possible for recorders to function very well if they live remotely but are able to spend a significant amount of time in their VC each year. New VCRs can be assured of help from their “neighbours”, from the Irish Officer, and from the Committee.

If you feel you might be interested in any of these vacancies, please contact Maria Long (maria.long@bsbi.org) and outline what experience you have that might be relevant to the role of a VCR. Where it seems appropriate, the Committee might consider a joint, temporary or provisional appointment.

Many thanks are due to the outgoing recorders – Tony O’Mahony, Sean Howard, and Jonathan Shackleton - for their stalwart work, and we look forward to their continuing involvement with BSBI in other ways.

The New Year Plant Hunt 2015 – an unexpected success

Maria Long, BSBI Irish Officer, *National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9*

This year we had an early and unexpected botanical success story in the form of the New Year Plant Hunt. I have reproduced the piece below from one of the many blogposts written by Louise Marsh and Ryan Clark relating to the survey.

But first let me point out some Irish highlights:

- The **first record** for the entire survey came from Oisín Duffy in Donegal, at nearly 1am on 1st Jan 2015, less than an hour after the four-day survey began!
- And if that wasn’t enough, Oisín was involved in **three separate lists!**
- Phoebe O’Brien was, I think, the only survey participant to **survey in two countries** – England and Ireland.
- Brian Seales was one of the few botanists to submit **two lists from the same day.**
- We had **21 lists** submitted from Ireland, from within **12 vice-counties**, and with an **average of 20 species** per list.
- While the Bull Island list got the credit for the **most species** (40), we had seven pairs of eyes on that trip! Apart from the shining lights mentioned above, Rodney Daunt in Cork, Paula O’Meara in Wexford and Clare Heardman/Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve in Cork were all outstanding, producing long species lists also.

A huge **thank you** is due to all who participated (**24 botanists** in all, see list below)! If you want to find out more get in touch with the Irish Officer, Maria Long (maria.long@bsbi.org).

Irish participants: **H1** Marc Cruise; **H2** Rory Hodd; **H3** Clare Heardman, Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve, Michael O'Donovan; **H4** Rodney Daunt; **H5** Donna O'Halloran; **H12** Ciarán Byrne, Paula O'Meara; **H15** Phoebe O'Brien, Brid Colhoun, Cathy Seale; **H16** Ciaran Bruton; **H21** Zoë Devlin, Brian Seales, Maria Long, Aoife Delaney, Rory Hodd, Alexis Fitzgerald, Seán Meehan, Roisín NigFhloinn; **H34** Oisín Duffy, Ralph Sheppard; **H35** Oisín Duffy; **H38** Anne Guichard.

New Year Plant Hunt 2015: the results – Blogpost from Fri 9th Jan 2015, by Louise Marsh (More to be found here: <http://bsbipublicity.blogspot.co.uk/>)

The results are in for BSBI's fourth New Year Plant Hunt, when wildflower enthusiasts across Britain and Ireland head out over the holidays and see what is in bloom in their local patch. We combine this traditional midwinter activity with C21st technology and use Twitter, Facebook and email to share photographs and observations, and we encourage people to get in touch if they need help in identifying a plant.

Dr Tim Rich, Plant Hunt co-founder, said "With 2014 being the warmest year on record, we were expecting lots of wild flowers still to be in bloom over New Year. What took us all by surprise was quite how many people were happy to go out and look for them!" Plant lovers spent up to three hours between 1st and 4th January hunting for wild plants in flower and we'd like to say a huge thank you to all of them for contributing to these amazing results:

- A total of 2,908 records of plants in flower from across Britain and Ireland.
- We received 143 lists - around half of them contained 20 or more plants in flower.
- A stunning 368 different species were recorded in flower.

Tim said "368 species in flower is an unprecedented 15% of the flowering plants in Britain and Ireland: the books suggest there should only be 20-30 species in flower. The most commonly recorded plants were Daisy and

Dandelion, each of which was recorded in 115 lists (75%). However, only 12 (3%) species were recorded in more than half of the lists, and most were only rarely found in flower: 160 (43%) species were only recorded in flower once, and 60 (16%) were only recorded twice. It was quite varied from site to site.”

“As expected, the mild south and west of Britain had the highest numbers of species still in flower, but we also had lists of over 50 species from the east and north of England, and an amazing 39 flowering in Edinburgh. We thought that the snow and hard frosts before Christmas would have finished most flowering in the north but it seems not to be the case (tough lot, those northerners!). In terms of absolute numbers, Cardiff won (it was joint winner last year) with 71 species in flower and Cornwall came second with 70 species in flower”.

Ryan Clark, a volunteer who coordinated the New Year Plant Hunt this year, said “It was astonishing to see so many records flooding in, from Guernsey to the Moray Firth and Norfolk to Donegal. 21 of the lists were from Ireland, and these had consistently high numbers of plants in flower too, with an average of about 20 – this was almost exactly on a par with Britain. The highest count in Ireland was 40 species flowering on Bull Island, in Dublin Bay, by BSBI’s Irish Officer Maria Long and fellow botanists. The west of Ireland also fared well, with Strawberry Tree in flower near Killarney, Co. Kerry”.

Ryan analysed the records to see which plants were growing where. He said “As in previous years, it was clear that urban areas tended to have more species in flower than rural areas. This is to be expected: there are more sheltered corners and disturbed ground with wild flowers with a short life cycle and high seed production (you won’t catch us calling them weeds!) and plants spreading out from gardens. “

“Around one third of the plants in flower proved to be species not native to Britain and Ireland, which may have escaped from gardens or cultivation. Plants from warmer climates may be continuing to flower in the mild autumn weather before winter frosts knock them back.”

Do the numbers of plants in flower this New Year indicate an early spring? Tim and Ryan concluded “Sadly, there does not seem to be any real indication of an early spring, although a few spring-flowering species like Lesser Celandine were quite widely recorded. Only 5 % of the species recorded were spring-flowering native specialists, such as Dog’s Mercury, and half of the

records of spring flowering plants were from just three species: Hazel, Lesser Celandine and Primrose.”

Dr Sarah Whild, who co-founded the Plant Hunt with Tim in 2012, said “The total of 368 wild plants in flower this year is much higher than the 222 recorded over the 2014 New Year, mainly due to the increase in the number of botanists looking for them! I’m delighted to see the Plant Hunt blossoming and even inspiring other countries to follow suit, with The Netherlands launching their own Plant Hunt this year!”

An old dog’s experience with MapMate

John Faulkner, *Drumherriff Lodge, Orchard Road, Lough Gall,
Co. Armagh, BT61 8JD*

My first half century had come and gone by the time I got my first PC. As you might expect from this confession, I have always found the prospect of doing something radically new with a computer very daunting. The first hurdle is the language. The words may be familiar but their meanings aren’t. Menus aren’t about food, files don’t contain paper, and webs aren’t made by spiders. Buttons can’t fasten your shirt-front, icons aren’t holy figures, and windows don’t admit fresh air. The second hurdle is your memory. Basically, it’s a shade deficient by comparison with the computer. In my case, it can’t cope with isolated pieces of information. Learning something new only works when the pieces start to fit together and a pattern starts to appear. The third is the lack of a usable instruction manual. How do you follow instructions from the internet on your screen when you need most of that same screen to implement those self-same instructions?

So, for many years, the prospect of using record-handling software such as MapMate was something I put off until the day would arrive when I had nothing better to do. Needless to say, it didn’t. I am fully conversant with using a PC for emails and word-processing, but databases were a different matter. Eventually, however, the need became critical. Either I picked up the challenge, or I might as well wave goodbye forever to the ambition of getting my vice-county records in order, compiling a Rare Plant Register, and eventually completing a Flora.

So I ordered MapMate. It sat in a drawer for several months. Oddly, I don't remember the detail of what happened next, so it cannot have been anything like as traumatic as I feared. The main reason is that BSBI has made it as easy as possible. There are written instructions you can download (I think someone took pity on me and gave me a set on paper), there are narrated videos to listen to, and from time to time training sessions to attend (free of charge!). What is more important is that these have all been produced, or are run, by botanists. Their first language is clearly much the same as mine. If computerists had been involved, there could have been some doubt on that point.

After two years or so, I now have all my post-2000 records entered up, and the magic works! Ask myself in which tetrads *Lamium hybridum* (Cut-leaved Dead-nettle) has been recorded in **H37**, and a few seconds later there is the map in front of me. Ask how many species have been recorded in each hectad in the county, click the mouse a few times, and there is the list in front of me. There are many, many things that MapMate can do which I don't know about, but as far as I am concerned it is a valuable tool which helps me do what I need to, not a toy to distract me into doing things I hadn't thought of. That's not to say I don't enjoy using it. On the contrary, it is very satisfying, but there is a risk of letting it gobble up your time.

At the moment, I am using MapMate alongside the BSBI's Distribution Database (DDb), a spreadsheet derived from the Recorder 6 database at CEDaR, and various manual sources to produce my RPR. It is rather clumsy having overlapping databases to consult, but each of them has some information not on the others. Occasionally the card index of my predecessor as VCR and other manual sources produce information not in any of the electronic databases. This is where being able to access the details of individual records quickly really begins to pay off and you can begin to answer real botanical questions.

An example. You realise that Ballybracken Bog has multiple records of two very similar species, though you have only seen one of them there. Bring up all the records and compare them closely. Were there any occasions when both were recorded at the same time? No! Working hypothesis: only one of the two species is present, and some observers got their ID wrong. Do some desk-based detective work. Send an email. One observer admits she would not

have been able to distinguish them at that stage in her botanical career. Another is now deceased but mainly used Webb's Flora, which is sketchy on the diagnostic features. Little doubt now remains – it's the species you recorded yourself.

In theory, of course, questions like this can be resolved without the need for databases, but what I have found time and again is that the ability to rearrange and display the data throws up lots of botanical questions that you would not have thought of looking into, or would have taken far longer to answer.

So I am now an enthusiastic convert, and recommend MapMate to anyone who is wavering. Here are a few tips that you may not find in the manuals.

- Install your MapMate and try to start using it before you go on a course; that way you will know what questions to ask.
- If at all possible, key in your own records yourself. You can read your own writing and interpret your own shorthand better than anyone else. You are also more likely to pick up recording errors.
- Do it as soon as practical, before you forget what you did or did not see.
- Keep your original field notes or record cards. I refer back to mine frequently.
- When recording, do write notes or comments on the less common species. Among other things it will show that you were aware that the species was unusual, whereas a pencil stroke through a plant name could easily be a slip for something commoner.
- Quality before quantity. Don't be intoxicated by the prospect of accumulating and being able to process vast numbers of records. There is usually much more botanical value in one thorough and accurate record of a less common species than in multiple records of ubiquitous ones.
- I have not found a satisfactory way of recording absences. This is something you might want to do when you are checking up on an old record, but you don't want your entry to generate an up-to-date dot on the map.

The distribution of *Gunnera tinctoria* and *G. manicata* in Ireland: records requested

Micheline Sheehy Skeffington, *Botany & Plant Science, NUI Galway, Galway.*

Email: micheline.sheehy@nuigalway.ie

Many of you know I have a bit of a fixation on *Gunnera* lately! So I am hoping to continue my quest to locate and identify as many records for the genus *Gunnera* in Ireland as I can and I wish to enlist the help of botanists throughout Ireland. Until recently, only *G. tinctoria* was mapped and considered established in Ireland (and indeed Britain); it is the only species referred to in Preston et al. (2002). But it was known that *G. manicata* was 'out there' and recently is turning up in records. Paul Green has two ('likely planted' and 'dumped' respectively) in his *Flora of County Waterford* (Green, 2008) and in recent work on *Gunnera tinctoria* in Connemara, I discovered *G. manicata* at a few roadside sites (Sheehy Skeffington and Hall, 2011). There, it also appeared to have been dumped, except where it had been planted in association with a hotel sewage plant. Nowhere was it seen to be spreading, though a few small plants were observed at the hotel site. A seed germination experiment showed it to have a very low success rate (0-4%; 50 seeds each, tested from 3 plants), compared to *G. tinctoria* (18-76%; 6 plants, 50 seeds each) (Sheehy Skeffington and Hall, 2011). As it happened, all of the *G. manicata* plants were located inland from the *G. tinctoria* locations and, as it is thought to be slightly more frost tolerant than *G. tinctoria* (Phillips and Rix 1993), I set to wondering was this a coincidence and how far inland would *G. tinctoria* actually establish itself?

Whereas *G. tinctoria* is undoubtedly a serious invasive along the Connemara coast (**H16**), in Achill and along the adjacent west Mayo coast (**H27**), these are very coastal locations and so far it is not invasive far inland in these vice counties, nor is it considered so elsewhere in Ireland. It has, however, been observed to be abundant in parts of the S. Kerry (**H1**) coast. A recent risk assessment for *G. tinctoria* in Ireland lists it as having a 'major' risk of establishing in counties outside Mayo and Galway (O'Rourke and O'Flynn 2014a) and includes a map indicating 'verified' locations for the species in Ireland. However this map shows a distribution far more widespread than in the Atlas 2000 (Preston et al. 2002) and includes many locations in the south

midlands. A similar document for *G. manicata* (O'Rourke and O'Flynn 2014b) notes this species as having a 'minimal' risk of spreading; the accompanying map includes some records but not all (e.g. the Connemara sites in Sheehy Skeffington & Hall (2011) or several entered in DDb, www.bsbidb.org.uk/).

Since publishing our paper, I have found, been shown and confirmed records for *G. manicata* in Muckcross House gardens (N. Kerry **H2**); one in a garden and one by a roadside in Clare (**H9**); at another roadside site in S. Connemara and two in gardens near Oughterard (**H16**); three (two in gardens) in West Mayo (**H27**) and two in West Donegal (**H35**). In DDb in addition to Paul Green's records, there are two from estates, one in Co Down (**H38**) and one in Fermanagh (**H33**) as well as one from a road-side in Wexford (**H12**), apparently planted (dumped?) (P. O'Meara, pers. comm.). The fact that many records for both species are from gardens or estates and therefore not established in the wild adds to the complexity of the story. I strongly suspect that plants in gardens are better able to survive harsh winters than those in the wild. I also suspect that quite a few of the *G. tinctoria* records, especially inland, may in fact be for *G. manicata*. I have also collected a number of specimens (so far only from Mayo, Sligo and Donegal) and sent them to John Armitage in Wisley, London who requested them for genetic study and results from that will be of interest.

A great deal of confusion still exists concerning the identification of each species (see Clement 2003; Grant 2004). My experience is that the species are distinguishable when in fruit, as *G. manicata* has much more open spikes with longer, relatively narrow spikelets, compared to the shorter, more stubby spikelets of *G. tinctoria*. If mature, the *G. manicata* spikes (ca 20-25cm x 75-100cm) can be much bigger than those of *G. tinctoria* (ca 10-15cm x 35-45cm). See photos pages 33 & 34. I am confident so far that I can identify both from mature spikes before they decay, but I would not attempt identification of vegetative specimens.

So am I right? I would really welcome any information anyone can send me on these two species. I would like to request you to please send me records for either species, with details of the location, habitat (please specify if planted /in a garden) and grid reference (preferably GPS, but not essential), but especially a **photo of at least one mature spike**. The best time to photograph them is August (see photos pages 33 & 34) and decayed winter specimens are

difficult to make out. I do not, however, need records for Achill and adjacent coast, for Killary harbour and the NW Connemara coast, or for sites you know I am aware of. But if any are recorded >5km inland in even coastal vice counties, I would welcome those records, as well as for the eastern coastal counties and especially any records for non-coastal vicecounties.

I would like to collate the information and try to build a story about these two species in Ireland. As part of this, I would prepare a map for both species throughout Ireland, distinguishing between planted specimens in gardens and those in the wild (albeit possibly dumped rather than self-sown, especially for *G. manicata*). So please, send me any information you have – I'm happy to do a *Gunnera* tour d'Irlande if it merits it –and have a bit of a social time too in my retirement!

Many thanks to Kevin Blehein, Don Cotton, Graham Day, Rory Hodd and Ralph Sheppard for guiding me to sites for one or both species, to Kieran Hall for a *G. manicata* record for Westport House and to Piaras Ó Giobúin for the S. Connemara *G. manicata* record.

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Colonization and ruination (H2)

Michael O'Sullivan, *Knockavota, Milltown, Co. Kerry*

In May 2011 I discovered a single plant of *Orchis mascula* (Early-purple Orchid) growing in Kilderry Wood (V99.80), N. Kerry (H2) which is just west of the village of Milltown.

It was a first for the species in this woodland and subsequent years I noted its annual rate of colonization, in 2012 there were four plants, 2013 sixteen and 2014 twenty-seven. This gives rise to the future prospect of an increasing healthy population.

Unfortunately, these beautiful orchids are facing ruination as a result of a proposed new link road from Milltown to Killorglin which will cut bang on through their site. This development due to commence in 2016 will have a catastrophic impact on these new colonizers and as a consequence will greatly diminish the biodiversity of the woodland as a whole.

The first record of *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid) in Cork for 148 years

John Diggin, *Cooney's Lane, Douglas, Co. Cork*

On the 30th of August 2014 I made the climb to Lough Murtagh in the Caherbarnagh mountain range on the Cork/Kerry border with the primary aim of searching for *Phegopteris connectilis* (Beech Fern), which is known to grow near the lake.

Despite Bog Orchid not having entered my head, when I came across a four to five foot wide thin sheet of water flowing almost imperceptibly downhill from its source about 60 feet from the lakeshore it reminded me immediately of a very similar known location for the species in the Dublin Mountains that I had searched unsuccessfully years previously. Almost immediately on having adopted the "Hammarbya hunch" I spotted one plant (see photo on front cover). With my heart racing, further scrutiny revealed another six flowering spikes close by. Encouragingly many of the plants had numerous bulbils along the edges of their basal leaves.

The orchids were growing in a loosely vegetated area, associated species being *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel), *Drosera rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Sundew), *Potentilla erecta* (*Tormentil*) and various grasses, sedges and

mosses. This constitutes the first recorded occurrence of Bog Orchid in Cork since 1866 (Moore & More 1866).

An already perfect day was rounded off beautifully when I saw my first specimens of Ivy-leaved Bellflower along the Flesk River near Killarney later that evening.

Reference:

Moore, D. & More A.G. (1866) *Contributions towards a Cybele Hibernica*. Hodges, Smith & Co., Dublin.

***Cyperus eragrostis* (Pale Galingale) in Cherrywood, Co. Dublin (H21)**

Richard McMullen, 75 Silchester Park, Glengageary, Co. Dublin

On 16/7/2014, I came across a population of the striking sedge *Cyperus eragrostis* (see photos page 32) in waste ground in Cherrywood (O235.230), Co Dublin.

The population occurs in a quadrangular depression about 100 m x 50 m in waste ground just west of the road linking Cherrywood to the M50 motorway. (This depression is just a small part of a vast area of ground which was prepared for some ambitious building project but is apparently now resting, awaiting the economic upturn.)

The depression is now very dry but was clearly sodden for a good part of its existence. Many of the individuals were growing among stunted *Schoenoplectus lacustris* (Common Club-rush) (knee high) and *Eleocharis palustris* (Common Spike-rush). There was much *Juncus articulatus* (Jointed Rush) scattered throughout and widespread miserable-looking *Ranunculus repens* (Creeping Buttercup). Also present were species usually associated with drier habitats e.g. *Trifolium pratense* (Red Clover), *Trifolium repens* (White Clover), *Lolium perenne* (Perennial Rye-grass), *Lotus corniculatus* (Common Bird's-foot-trefoil), etc. *Blackstonia perfoliata* (Yellow-wort) and *Centaureum erythraea* (Common Centaury) are growing nearby.

118 individuals, laden with mature fruits, were found as well as numerous scattered seedlings, all looking quite at home and spreading. Indeed, this sedge looked healthier and more vigorous than the native species struggling to survive on a sub-stratum stripped of much of its topsoil. The long

leaf-like bracts, the dense fruit clusters and the bright lemony/yellow leaves must make it the easiest sedge to identify.

In 'A catalogue of alien plants in Ireland' (Reynolds 2002) there are five records mentioned, all in the south of Ireland - in vice-counties **H3**, **H4**, **H5** and **H6** - the earliest of these records was in 1997 at Dungarvan (P. Green). Since the above publication *Cyperus eragrostis* has been added to three additional vice-counties **H11**, **H12** (see page 37) and **H18**. Data abstracted from the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb).

Reference:

Reynolds, S.C.P. (2002) *A catalogue of alien plants in Ireland*. National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

***Cyrtomium falcatum* (House holly-fern) in Ely Place, Dublin 2 (H21)**

Richard McMullen, 75 Silchester Park, Glenageary, Co. Dublin

In early, April (3/4/2014) while wandering the streets of Dublin, I noticed a robust leathery fern growing from a crack in the masonry in the dank and gloomy basement area of a house in Ely Place, not far from St Stephen's Green.

This turned out to be *Cyrtomium falcatum*, the House holly-fern (see photo page 66). It was accompanied by *Polystichum setiferum* (Soft-Shieldfern), *Asplenium scolopendrium* (Hart's-tongue fern) and *Asplenium rutamuraria* (Wall-rue), all looking very happy.

This appears to be a first record for **H21** (Dublin). There are two references in 'A catalogue of alien plants in Ireland' (Reynolds 2002). The earlier record is in W Cork (**H3**) 'W. of Schull pier, crevice in cliff face at about extreme high tide level' (Cullinane & Crowley 1985 DBN). The more recent record is from E. Cork (**H5**) 'Cork City 2000, single stunted clump on railway boundary wall' (O'Mahony 2001c).

BSBI hectad maps show a dot for Scotland, Wales and for the Isle of Man and a scattering of records mostly in the south of England and Channel Islands.

References:

Cullinane, J.P. & Crowley, C. (1985) *Cyrtomium falcatum* in Ireland. *Fern Gazette* 13: 42.

O'Mahony, T. (2001c) A report on the flora of Cork (**H3-H5**), 2000. Ir. Bot. News No. 11: 31-37.

Reynolds, S.C.P. (2002) *A catalogue of alien plants in Ireland*. National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

Vice-county reports

A report on the Flora of Cork (H3-H5), 2014

Tony O'Mahony, 6 Glenthorn Way, Dublin Hill, Cork City

Introduction

The year 2014 marked my fortieth year as Botanical Recorder for Co. Cork (i.e. 1974-2014) *and* my imminent resignation from that role, given that ongoing health problems prevent me from adequately fulfilling the duties of a Recorder, in these hectic years leading up to the production of 'Atlas 2020'. It also means that this is my *last* yearly Cork Botanical Report for *Irish Botanical News*, to which journal I have contributed reports since its inception (i.e. the period 1991-2014). For this invaluable convenience, I express my heartfelt gratitude to Brian Rushton, who brought this journal into existence; edited it, and bore the full burden of its production over an eighteen-year period. I similarly thank his very talented and capable editorial successor, Paul Green, who has marvellously revamped *Irish Botanical News*, adding colour photographs, extending the section on book reviews, and coaxing a much wider group of Irish botanists to contribute to its content on a yearly basis. I will, of course, continue to utilise this journal for my more formal taxonomic papers, dealing with interspecific hybrids in such genera as: *Carex* (Sedges), *Eleocharis* (Spike-rushes), *Equisetum* (Horsetails), *Geranium* (Crane's-bills), *Helosciadium* (i.e. the 'Marshwort' taxa formerly included in the genus *Apium*), *Myosotis* (Forget-me-nots), *Rosa* (Wild Roses) *Viola* (Violets) and the family *Poaceae*.

2014 has proved a remarkable year for the reinstatement at the county or vice-county level, of rare native species that have not been recorded therein, in a century or more – such as John Diggins' finds of *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid) (see photo on front cover) (new to the county flora) and *Filago minima* (Small Cudweed) (an update for Mid Cork). Similarly, Tony and Kristin Miller reinstated *Wahlenbergia hederacea* (Ivyleaved Bellflower) to the West Cork

flora, and my own efforts provided Mid Cork updates for *Equisetum hyemale* (Dutch Rush / Rough Rush) and *Viola canina* (Heath Dog-violet). While this suite of rare- species updates is undoubtedly exhilarating, it comes laden with a sting in the tail – as it poignantly and starkly highlights the fact that *Co. Cork has lost numerous habitats and plant species since the late-1970s*, as a direct consequence of the Irish Republic’s entry into the European Union (then the European Economic Community). While this momentous event heralded an unprecedented financial boon for the farming community of the Irish Republic, these benefits were ultimately gained at enormous cost to wildlife habitats, as the radical, highly intensive, environmentally-inimical new farming practises, wreaked havoc on ecological habitats and their attendant biodiversity. (Note: Throughout Co. Cork at the present time, the destruction of wildlife habitats by farming activities and drainage schemes, proceeds at a seemingly ever-accelerating pace – an environmental catastrophe that is compounded by the equally relentless, unrestrained production, of ‘one-off’ housing developments in wilderness habitats. Moreover, further threats to the habitats and flora of Cork City are looming, as plans are afoot to repoint the city’s limestone quay-walls, which may lead to the total elimination, or massive reduction, of its very varied and colourful wall-flora! Similarly, Cork County Council’s plans to prevent devastating flooding downriver of the Inniscarra Dam (in the event of exceptional periods of prolonged, heavy rainfall), pose serious threats to the species-rich natural habitats of the River Lee’s lower reaches, and to some of its tributary streams.)

On 9 April, an adventive population of *Erodium moschatum* (Musk Stork’s-bill) (originally recorded in 2000) was found to still be thriving in grassy roadside margins beside ‘Ashgrove’ housing estate (**H5**, W69.73) on the Old Ballyvolane Road, Cork City. Subsequent examination of a roadside hedgebank (**H5**, W699.742) close to Arderrow T-junction, revealed a single, vegetative clump of an anomalous garden-discard, bearing *succulent, pedate-crescentiform* leaves, held on ivory-white, dark-blotched, petioles – suggesting a possible *Helleborus* (Hellebore) taxon. However, a perusal through a wealth of illustrative plates, revealed it to be a *Dracunculus* species, most likely *D. vulgaris* (Dragon Arum), which is new to the Cork Flora.

On 27 April, the interconnecting road between Cloghroe Junction (**H4**, W561.743) and Inniscarra Junction (**H4**, W554.727) displayed intermittent

marginal clonal stands of the colourful garden throughout, *Lamiaeum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum* (Variegated Yellow Archangel). This rampageous taxon is becoming ever more frequent on Co. Cork roadsides, and was later found in two additional sites: (1) near the carpark of the Inniscarra boat-site (**H4**, W521.728), on the left bank of the River Lee Reservoir, bordering the R618; and (2) on a minor road at Coolacullig (**H4**, W455.745), to the north of Coachford village, where it cohabited with native *Alliaria petiolata* (Garlic Mustard) – this latter species rare throughout this region.

(Note: The following (8 May) entry, graphically highlights how the *lack* of legal protection for national plant rarities can have dire biodiversity consequences.)

On 8 May, some twelve flowering plants of the nationally rare *Geranium purpureum* (Little Robin) were refound on a hedgebank at Rathcooney Crossroads (**H5**, W71.75) near Glanmire village, where I originally recorded this species in May 1998. This proved a particularly gratifying rediscovery, seeing that the population here has been pushed to the point of extinction over the past decade, as a consequence of the ongoing, annual use of herbicides in its environs. This may now be the only extant East Cork site for Little Robin, given that its main population on nearby Church Hill (**H5**, W72.74) was eliminated, together with its hedgebank habitat, in 2006, prior to the construction of a housing scheme here. The Loss of this Church Hill hedgebank habitat was appalling on two fronts: (1) this circumneutral hedgebank was a species-rich habitat, and supported populations of the nationally rare *Geranium purpureum* (first recorded here in 1979) and its interspecific hybrid, *G. purpureum* x *G. robertianum* (which I found here in July 1988 and in subsequent years), this being the *first record in the world* for this wild hybrid); and (2) this site could have been conserved for posterity, if the legal protection afforded *G. purpureum* under the 'Flora Protection Order, 1980' had not subsequently been revoked, on the basis of the *totally unfounded* taxonomic opinion that: "...its [*G. purpureum*'s] taxonomic status is uncertain enough to warrant its exclusion [from legal protection] at present, and it may at best be a subspecies of *G. robertianum*." (Curtis & McGough, 1988: 111).

On 14 May, fieldwork on the left bank of the River Lee Reservoir at Lower Dripsey (**H4**, W51.73) turned up a small population of *Viola canina* (Heath Dog-violet) in flower, this being the first Mid Cork record for this species

since 1870, when it was found by a Mr R. Mills (in the same hectad) on the steep-sided, western flank of the River Shournach valley, a short distance west of Blarney village. At Lower Dripsey, Heath Dog-violet occurs on bare gravel, close to the edge of the reservoir, where it cohabits with the native *Lepidium heterophyllum* (Smith's Pepperwort), *Potentilla anglica* (Trailing Tormentil), *Myosotis discolor* (Changing Forget-me-not) and (at a distance) *Viola riviniana* (Common Dog-violet). Long-naturalised, associated species here, are: *Kickxia elatine* (Sharp-leaved Fluellen), *Veronica crista-galli* (Crested Field-speedwell) and *Cyperus eragrostis* (Pale Galingale). (Note: *Viola canina* is a decreasing species throughout its Irish and British range, as its inland habitats fall victim to contemporary land-use changes; its main concentration of extant populations are nowadays mostly confined to coastal sand-dune habitats. Yet, in Co. Cork, Heath Dog-violet has its headquarters inland, on the peaty banks and inundation-meadows bordering Lough Allua (a lake-like expansion of the River Lee) situated between the villages of Inchigeela and Ballingearry (**H3**, W2.6. & W1.6.))

On 28 May, fieldwork was undertaken along the R584 between the villages of Inchigeela and Ballingearry (**H3**, W2.6. & W1.6.), bordering the northern shore of Lough Allua, on the River Lee. On a grassy roadside-margin, close to a disused sand-quarry (**H3**, W17.66), I rechecked an extensive, naturalised population of *Fragaria ananassa* (Garden Strawberry), which was now well into flower here. The adjacent roadside hedgebank (bordering Lough Allua), held beautiful flowering colonies of *Orchis mascula* (Earlypurple Orchid), while the quarry pathway had populations of long-naturalised *Juncus tenuis* (Slender Rush). My main focus of attention, however, was the margin of Lough Allua, where I hoped to update *Viola* records, as initial work I had undertaken in this area back in April-May 1997, revealed that a complex mix of *Viola* (Violet) taxa were present here. While that work established that *Viola canina* (Heath Dog-violet) has its Co. Cork headquarters at Lough Allua (where it is of common occurrence), it also showed that the pollen/fruit-sterile interspecific hybrid, *V. canina* x *V. riviniana* (Common Dogviolet) was widespread along the shoreline, where it cohabited with its parents – an addition to the Cork flora. In 1993, Ro FitzGerald visited Lough Allua, in order to map the distribution and frequency of *Viola lactea* (Milky Violet / Pale Dog-violet) on the margins of this lough, from where it had first

officially been added to the Irish Flora in June 1900 (R. A. Phillips, 1900; *The Irish Naturalist* 9: 244). She subsequently informed me (*in litt.* 1997) that she had found *V. lactea* in one locality, where it cohabited with *V. canina* (Heath Dog-violet) and their putative hybrid, *V. canina* x *V. lactea*. My own work at Lough Allua in 1997, corroborated Ro FitzGerald's observations and, at that time, I collected some living material of the interspecific hybrid, *V. canina* x *V. lactea*, for cultivation. (Note: Both *V. lactea* and *V. canina* x *V. lactea* were again found at Lough Allua (in small quantity) during the present (May, 2014) visit.)

Fieldwork in the Carrigadrohiid area on 14 June, produced a stand of *Equisetum hyemale* (Rough Rush) on the left bank of the River Lee, immediately upriver of Carrigadrohid Bridge and castle (**H4**, W413.724). This proved a wonderful surprise, as Dutch Rush was last reported from Mid Cork prior to 1845 (Power 1845), when it was recorded from two sites: (1) "By the River Lee, near Ballincollig [**H4**, W5.7.]: Mr Alexander"; and (2) "Near the Ovens [**H4**, W5.7.]: Dr Power". (Note: The one-word 'Ovens' location given for this species by Dr Power, was unusually vague for him, and thus makes this historical site very difficult to relocate. It most likely refers to the South Bride River (a tributary of the nearby River Lee), which is bisected by Ovens Bridge (**H4**, W54.69), on the N22 (Cork-Macroom Road) to the West of Ballincollig Town. While the meandering, upriver (southern) portion of the South Bride River remains relatively intact to this day, the downriver (northern) section has long been out of bounds, as it borders a private concrete works, and the habitat here has consequently been greatly altered/degraded over the decades. There is also the possibility that Dr Power's site for Dutch Rush was on the River Lee itself, at the point of its confluence with its tributary, the South Bride River.) The only other known extant Co. Cork site for Dutch Rush, is on the margin of an islet in the River Lee Reservoir, at the famous Gearagh Alluvial Forest (**H3**, W30.70), SW of Macroom town.

On 16 June, the East Cork hectad, (**H5**, W8.8.) was visited. North of Bartlemy village (**H5**, W81.88), an inundation-meadow bordering the right bank of the Ballyglissane River-valley, adjacent to Ward's Bridge (**H5**, W816.896) held a clonal population of the highly pollen-/fruit-sterile interspecific hybrid, *Potentilla anglica* (Trailing Tormentil) x *P. repens* (Creeping Cinquefoil) (= *P. x mixta*) – a hybrid that was subsequently found also, on the grassy margin of the R626 (Rathcormack-Ballincurrag Road) close to the

Bluebell Bridge junction (**H5**, W826.891). Scrutiny of the triangle of roads immediately north of Bluebell Bridge (monads **H5**, W82.89. & W83.89) updated records for *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose) and the hybrid cross, *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *R. x suberecta*), while naturalised stands of *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum* (Variegated Yellow Archangel) were found in two locations, of which the largest population occurred close to Kippaun Bridge (**H5**, W834.891). Irish Spurge (*Euphorbia hyberna*) is present throughout this hectad, but seemingly mainly as small, isolated populations. On walking back to the crossroads at Bartlemy village, the northern arm yielded small populations of *Geranium lucidum* (Shining Crane's-bill) and *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose), while the southern arm (leading to Garryantaggart Crossroads) produced scattered plants of *Euphorbia hyberna* (Irish Spurge) and *Rosa tomentosa*. The western arm of Garryantaggart Crossroads (**H5**, W81.87) held a naturalised stand of *Lysimachia punctata* s. l. (Dotted Loosestrife) and some interesting *Rosa* taxa (Wild Roses), including the only stand of *Rosa sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) seen on this outing.

On 25 June, a stop on the southern arm of Skenakilla Crossroads (**H5**, R64.04), to the north of Killavullen village, on the River Blackwater, updated records for a range of rose taxa, including: *Rosa arvensis* (Field-rose), *R. micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar), *R. tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose), *R. corymbifera* (Hairy Dog-rose), *R. canina* (Dog-rose) and the nationally-rare interspecific hybrid, *R. micrantha* x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *R. x bigeneris*), which I originally recorded in this area in 1994. Taking the N73 (Mitchellstown-Mallow Road) SW from Skenakilla Crossroads, work in the vicinity of Torpys Crossroads (**H5**, R61.03) updated my 2005 records for *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose), and the two, interspecific crosses: *Rosa canina* (Dog-rose) x *R. tomentosa* (= *R. x scabriuscula*), and *R. sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *R. x suberecta*). The distinctive and beautiful *Rosa arvensis* (Field-rose), is of common occurrence throughout this entire region, in hedgebanks on fertile (mostly calcareous) soils. On following the N73 into hectad (**H5**, R5.0.) the last work of the day was undertaken on the minor roads of Mountnagle T-junction (**H5**, W59.01) and Lissanisky T-junction (**H5**, R59.00). Both yielded the ubiquitous *Rosa arvensis* (Field-rose), in addition to localised bushes of *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose), *R. micrantha*

(Small-flowered Sweet-briar) and the interspecific hybrid, *R. sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *R. x suberecta*).

On 4 July, flowering stands of the beautiful *Rosa multiflora* (Manyflowered Rose) were seen to be naturalised on the western margin of the R626 (Rathcormack-Midleton Road), on both sides of Ballincurrig village (**H5**, W84.81) – an addition to the East Cork flora. (Note: This native of East Asia has played an important role in the history of rose-breeding, and is the ancestor of the garden 'Polyantha' or 'Floribunda' roses.) *Rosa multiflora* is well known to be a vigorous, rampant climber, and this characteristic was clearly demonstrated at its Ballincurrig Bridge site (**H5**, W85.80), where it climbed high into, and cascaded over, the adjacent trees.

On 7 July, John Diggin reported finding hundreds of plants of *Filago minima* (Small Cudweed) in a disused quarry (**H4**, W694.644) shortly east of Killanully Church, on the R613 (Carrigaline-Ballygarvan Road) on the western side of Cork Harbour. This would seem to be the first Mid Cork record for Small Cudweed in over a century, and its discovery opens up the exciting possibility that this visually distinctive annual species, may be present in other disused quarry-sites on the western side of Cork Harbour.

On 8 July, a halt at Longfield's Bridge (**H4**, W51.97) on the River Blackwater, shortly west of Mallow town, allowed a quick search of the left (northern) riverbank, immediately above the bridge. Here occurred populations of *Allium ursinum* (Ramsons), *Carex pendula* (Pendulous Sedge), *Lysimachia nummularia* (Creeping-jenny) and *Viola reichenbachiana* (Early Dog-violet). A fortuitous and delightful surprise, was the finding of two, flowering heads of *Allium scorodoprasum* (Sand Leek) on the margin of the river-field. Sand Leek was first found on the River Blackwater by H.C. Hart in 1885, who recorded it as occurring as discrete populations on the left bank of the river, from Mallow town (**H5**, W56.98) downriver to Cregg Castle (**H5**, W76.98), near Fermoy. (Within this stretch of river, I have found many new populations of Sand Leek on both riverbanks, during the period, 1972-2004.) The Longfield's Bridge site for Sand Leek, lies in Mid Cork (**H4**), and it remains to be seen if further, upriver, Mid Cork populations of Sand Leek, will be discovered in the years' ahead. (Note: Paul Green (Green, 2008) has recently found River Blackwater populations of Sand Leek in Co. Waterford, thus considerably extended the range of this rare species on this Munster river.) A

subsequent stop at Coolnamagh Crossroads (**H4**, R46.00), to the south of Cecilstown, updated my 2006 finds of the nationally rare rose hybrid, *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose) x *R. sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose), which is present as scattered bushes, on both the northern and western arms of this crossroads. The eastern arm of Coolnamagh Crossroads, yielded populations of the native *Pimpinella major* (Greater Burnet-saxifrage), *Euonymus europaeus* (Spindle), *Agrimonia procera* (Fragrant Agrimony) and the rose hybrid cross, *Rosa stylosa* (Short-styled Field-rose) x *R. canina* (Dogrose) (= *R. x andegavensis*). Also present, was a naturalised clump of *Melissa officinalis* (Lemon Balm) and an extensive hedge of *Prunus cerasus* (Dwarf Cherry), a popular hedging shrub in Co. Cork, where it is of frequent occurrence, yet rarely fruits.

Communication from Tony and Kristin Miller in mid-August, revealed that they had reinstated the beautiful *Wahlenbergia hederacea* (Ivy-leaved Bellflower) to the West Cork flora! The species occurred in small quantity, in a rushy-field (**H3**, W17.59) near Tooreen, at the base of the Shehy Mountains, NW of Dunmanway town. This is a marvellous find, and gives hope that Ivy-leaved Bellflower is still extant in other sites in this wilderness area. In the nineteenth century, Co. Cork boasted many sites for this charming species, and its disappearance from most of these sites, is testament to the intensity and effectiveness of the large-scale drainage of paludal habitats that has occurred throughout this county, in the long interim period.

On 20 August, the road running south from Lower Ballea Bridge (**H4**, W71.62), on the Owenboy River, west of Carrigaline town, produced clonal stands of the native interspecific hybrid, *Stachys palustris* (Marsh Woundwort) x *S. sylvatica* (Hedge Woundwort) (= *S. x ambigua*) and occasional hedgebank bushes of *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose) and *R. micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar). Also present here, were naturalised populations of *Carex pendula* (Pendulous Sedge) and *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum* (Variegated Yellow Archangel), together with a single, established clump of flowering *Acanthus mollis* (Bear's-breech) – a beautiful and spectacular species (a native of the West and Central Mediterranean), that is new to the Mid Cork flora, but long-established in a few West Cork sites. Subsequent work in the environs of nearby Carrigaline town, on the western shore of Cork Harbour, brought home forcefully to me once again, how

blighted the area now looks, as a consequence of the totally uncontrolled spread of the two, obnoxious, rampant weed species: *Clematis vitalba* (Traveller's-joy) and *Petasites fragrans* (Winter Heliotrope), both of which became naturalised here during the period, 1860-1870. Since their establishment in Cork Harbour (and Co. Cork in general), these highly invasive alien species have wreaked havoc on the environment, overrunning and seriously degrading, numerous species-rich microhabitats – as I have recently highlighted in my book, *Wildflowers of Cork City and County* (O'Mahony, 2009).

On 30 August, John Diggin reinstated the nationally rare, and legally protected, *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid) (see photo on front cover) to the Cork Flora! The location was the environs of Lough Murtagh (H3, W18.88), in the Caherbarnagh Mountains, to the west of Millstreet town. John recorded seven flowering plants of Bog Orchid at this West Cork site, but this orchid might ultimately prove to be more frequent here, as it is an inconspicuous species, and thus easily overlooked. This find is an affirmative reply to the following statement of mine: "Bearing in mind the wealth of bogland sites in County Cork, it seems difficult to accept that Bog Orchid has only been recorded *once* in this vast county, namely: 'Between Inchageela and Macroom [West Cork]: J. Sullivan' (Moore & More, 1866)" (O'Mahony, 2009).

On 2 September, I visited the newly-opened public walkway, on the left (northern) bank of the River Lee Reservoir, immediately downriver of Roove's Bridge (H4, W45.71), near Coachford village. (Depending on one's viewpoint, this walkway can be regarded as either a boon for walkers', or as an unwanted intrusion on the environment, given that natural history fieldwork can no longer be undertaken here in peaceful surroundings, and that there is now every likelihood of rubbish being discarded by people, both along the walkway and along the shoreline.) The walkway covers some three kilometres in length, and incorporates monads: W46.71., W47.71., W48.71., and part of W47.72. The most gratifying finds on the gravelly shoreline here, were *Chamaemelum nobile* (Chamomile), *Limosella aquatica* (Mudwort), *Persicaria minor* (Small Water-pepper) and *Chenopodium rubrum*, all of which occur on the opposite (right bank) of the reservoir also, where I first recorded Chamomile in 1975, and Red Goosefoot in 2004. Also of frequent occurrence on the shoreline by the walkway, was the adventive, annual weed, *Solanum nigrum* (Black Nightshade), suggesting that the populations of this species seen downriver at

Lower Dripsey (H4, W51.73) and the Inniscarra boat-site (H4, W51.72. & W52.72) in October 2013, may be seed-derived from the Roove's Bridge colony. On the steep-sloped, northern bank of the Reservoir immediately downriver of Roove's Bridge (H4, W45.71), I found some scattered, apparently recently-established, clumps of *Cyperus eragrostis* (Pale Galingale), which may also be derived from seed washed downriver from its populations upriver at Hartnett's Cross (H4, W35.71) near Macroom, which I discovered in October 2001. As I predicted at that time, the visually attractive Pale Galingale, has the potential to be an alien pest species on Irish waterways, and it is now present (as scattered colonies) over a large stretch of the River Lee Reservoir, from Macroom downriver to the Inniscarra boatsite (H4, W52.72).

On 2 September, I updated my 1997 Mid Cork records for the alien *Nymphoides peltata* (Fringed Water-lily) from two, small pond sites at Caum (H4, W38.71. & W38.72) on the R618 (Carrigadrohid-Macroom Road).

Fringed Water-lily is a visually attractive, yellow-flowered aquatic, and is also naturalised in a few other Mid Cork (H4) and East Cork (H5) sites. One of its Caum pond sites, also holds marginal stands of *Mentha aquatic* (Water Mint), *M. arvensis* (Corn Mint) and their interspecific hybrid, *M. x verticillata* (Whorled Mint), together with *Bidens tripartita* (Trifid Bur-marigold). The minor road at this site supports scattered bushes of *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose) and *R. micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar). A subsequent brief stop on the left bank of the River Lee Reservoir, immediately downriver of Lee Bridge (H3, W34.71), yielded populations of naturalised *Juncus tenuis* (Slender Rush), while hedgerows bordering the minor road running south from Lee Bridge (monads, H3, W34.71. & W34.70) produced scattered bushes of *Rosa tomentosa* (Harsh Downy-rose), *R. micrantha* (Small-flowered Sweet-briar), *R. corymbifera* (Hairy Dog-rose), *R. canina* (Dog-rose) and the interspecific cross, *R. sherardii* (Sherard's Downy-rose) x *R. rubiginosa* (Sweet-briar) (= *R. x suberecta*).

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Interesting Plants in Co. Waterford (H6), 2014

Paul R. Green, *Yoletown, Ballycullane, New Ross, Co. Wexford*

There was little activity in Waterford during 2014, but the quality of the records collected certainly compensate for it. Indeed, a number of new hectad and tetrad records were made in the south of the county.

In April, I had two days collecting dandelions, 7 new species were added to the county list: *Taraxacum acutifidum* and *T. atactum* – on verge around the car park at Colligan Wood, (X214.973); *T. britannicum* – on a grassy area around filter ponds, Lemybrien (S332.020); *T. gelertii* and *T. sellandii* – on verge of the N25, Ballyduff West (S483.096); *T. gelertii* on road verge, Carrowgarrieff (X191.999); *T. lamprophyllum* – on road verge, Knockroe (X225.994); *T. subhamatum* – on road verge, Knockanpower (S223.000). I also found a second county record of *T. drucei* – on a grassy area around filter ponds, Lemybrien (S332.021). All were determined by John Richards.

There were three other new county records:

- looking over the car park barrier to stop one falling into the River Suir, on the water front in Waterford City (S60.12), I was surprised to see *Polygonum viridis* (Water Bent) growing out of the wall in quantity.
- Paula O'Meara found fruiting trees of *Prunus domestica* subsp. *insititia* (Damson / Bullace) at Ballycanvan Little (S66.09).
 - Paula found the last new species for the county *Nassella tenuissima* (Argentine Needle-grass) in November at Butlerstown North (S56.10), self-sown in paving cracks of car park.



Above: *Cyperus eragrostis* (Pale Galingale). Photos: R. McMullen © 2014. See page 19.

Left: *Glebionis segetum* (Corn Marigold). Photo: M. O'Donovan © 2015. See page 9.



Above: *Gunnera tinctoria*, Leenane-Maam Road, Galway.

Below: *G. manicata*, Bunbeg, Donegal.

Photos: M. Sheehy-Skeffington © 2014. See page 15.





Above: *Gunnera tinctoria*, Leenane-Maam Road, Galway. Photo: M. SheehySkeffington © 2014. Below: *G. manicata*, Kevin Blehein's garden. Photo: N. Scott © 2014. See page 15.





Above: Jo Denyer, grass workshop at Members' Conference, Dublin.
Photo: M. Long © 2014. See page 6.

Below: *Arbutus unedo* (Strawberry-tree). Photo: R. Hodd © 2015. See page 9.



Recording in Wexford (H12), 2014

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I am not sure where to start, as 2014 was such a successful year, with more than double the number of records collected than the previous year. Recording took place over the whole year, with over 70% of the records made in the southern half of the county. One of the surprises was the large number of new county records, 38 in total, 17 of which are native.

The first new county record was made by Paula O'Meara on 12 January with a large patch of *Polypodium x shivasiae* (*P. cambricum x interjectum*) on the bank of the railway at Dunbrody (S71.15), determined by Rob Crooke the BSBI referee for *Polypodium*. By the end of March I had added two more of the new county records: *Allium subhirsutum* (Hairy Garlic), three clumps on a roadside ditch, Stonepark (S93.35) and *Scilla bithynica* (Turkish Squill), well established along the road verge, over the ditch and into a field, Ballyvergin (S87.25).

April saw me spending a few days collecting dandelions. Of the 30 or so specimens I collected 12 were new county records: *Taraxacum alatum* – road verge, Macoyle Lower (T209.664), *T. atactum* – road verge, Clonough (T210.667); *T. britannicum* – slumping sea-cliff, Haggard (S846.070); *T. duplidentifrons* – graveyard, Ballycullane (S794.144); *T. haematicum* – dune, Carna (T127.660); *T. hamatifforme* – road verge, Landscape (S707.239); *T. intumescens* – gateway to farmyard, Rathumney (S769.166); *T. lingulatum* – road verge, Ballycullane (S795.144); *T. pannulatum* – bank of car park in New Ross (S718.273); *T. sellandii* – road verge, Ballylannan (S840.143); *T. subhamatum* – road verge, Stokestown (S694.236); *T. undulatum* – top of sea-cliff, Bannow (S843.069). All determined by John Richards.

Ciarán Byrne had *Glebionis segetum* (Corn Marigold) along the margin of a field at Carna (T12.06), a species that had a bumper year in 2014, turning up in stubble fields all over the county. Ciarán updated a number of species to post 2000 for the hectad S85 SW of Bunclody, all being last recorded by Ro FitzGerald in the early 1990s. His *Nasturtium microphyllum* (Narrow-fruited Water-cress) is only the sixth county record since 2000. Frankie Tennant & Roy Watson found lots of *Spirodela polyrhiza* (Greater Duckweed) in a marshy area

at the edge of Tacumshin Lake (T06.06); this is the first county record since 1901. Their *Filago vulgaris* (Common Cudweed) on the dunes at Rosslare (T09.17) was new for the hectad and *Veronica catenata* (Pink Water-speedwell) was the first hectad record since 1990. They also had *Raphanus raphanistrum* subsp. *maritimus* (Sea Radish) on the dunes at Rosslare (T09.16), the first record for the hectad since 1896. *Viola canina* (Heath Dog-violet) at Nethertown (T12.04) was the first record for the hectad since David Webb recorded it there in 1956.

Jim Hurley found over a hundred *Cyperus eragrostis* (Pale Galingale) on a roadside at Grange, (S97.05) - a new county record. Mary Foley asked Paula O'Meara to identify a grass growing as a weed in an arable field at Wood Graigue (S91.12), it turned out to be *Phalaris canariensis* (Canarygrass), new for the hectad, a species that is increasingly turning up in arable fields.

Gaudinia fragilis (French Oat-grass) found in May on the Hook Peninsula (S70) by Paula O'Meara was one of the most interesting finds of the year. Here it was found in large quantities on a damp road and lane verges and a damp meadow, in four adjacent monads. Paula added another four new county records: *Saxifraga x urbiium* (Londonpride) – garden discard surviving in house ruin, Dunbrody (S72.15); *Hordeum vulgare* (Six-rowed Barley) – verge of the N25, Ballymacar (S74.26); *Bergenia crassifolia* (Elephant-ears) – single clump surviving on ditch, Haytown (S76.05) and *Lavandula angustifolia* (Garden Lavender) – self-sown on road/kerb verge, Ardavan Business Park (T05.24). Paula found a new site for *Trifolium occidentale* (Western Clover) on the cliffs at Booley Bay (S74.06); this is the most westerly site in Ireland. Her best find of the year is a new site for *Betonica officinalis* (Betony) on an overgrown road verge at Ballygow (S87.09), this is a new hectad record and now brings the total of extant sites in the county to three. Paula has been making good progress on the complex *Dryopteris affinis* agg. group. *Dryopteris borreri* is now found in a scattering of sites over the county.

Ro FitzGerald joined Paula O'Meara and me for some recording in May at Carnivan Head (S78.02) to search for *Trifolium scabrum* (Rough Clover), last reported by H.C. Hart in 1882 on the bare banks at the top of the sea-cliffs. Walking the cliffs the grass was so thick, it didn't look very promising for any small species of plant. It was not long before the cliffs rose higher and the turf thinned to expose bare rock. Here the clover grew in profusion for over 30m.

The next day we visited several pingos at Camaross (S88.24) where we found a large population of *Eleogiton fluitans* (Floating Club-rush), a rare species in the county.

Roger Goodwillie found a number of good records at Balcarrighill Quarry (T11.50). His *Barbarea intermedia* (Medium-flowered Winter-cress) and *Danthonia decumbens* (Heath-grass) were new for the hectad and his *Geranium pyrenaicum* (Hedgerow Crane's-bill) was the first record for the hectad since 1943, when recorded by Mildred Ferguson at Gorey.

Shane Farrell found some really interesting species from the marsh south of Cahore Point (T20.44). His *Rumex maritimus* (Golden Dock) is the first county record away from the southeast corner of the county. It was found growing along a newly made track and in the corner of a damp field. Also along the track was an abundance of *Senecio inaequidens* (Narrowleaved Ragwort) - a second county record. This may have arrived with the rubble used for the track. Shane's *Azolla filiculoides* (Water Fern) was the first for this part of the county and his *Scutellaria galericulata* (Skullcap) was new for the marsh and hectad. From the dunes (T21.44) in front of the marsh Shane found *Cynoglossum officinale* (Hound's-tongue), the first record here since 1961.

Zoë Devlin was surprised to find *Crassula helmsii* (New Zealand Pigmyweed) had turned up in her garden pond at Gibletstown (S90.11). The *Crassula* wasn't deliberately introduced - just wonder how it arrived!

Two get-togethers of the Wexford Botany Group were arranged; the first was at Rosslare (T01) in April where we had a magical day, finding every species on our hit list. *Erysimum cheiranthoides* (Treacle-mustard) on an area of sandy waste ground on the edge of the golf course was the first county record since 1994. *Vicia lathyroides* (Spring Vetch) was flowering well in a number of locations and added to several new monads. The best find of the day was *Equisetum variegatum* (Variegated Horsetail) by a small pond, new for the hectad and the only extant site in the county. The second gettogether was again in April to record a monad at Bunclody (S90.56): we recorded 182 species. The rarest species recorded was *Filago minima* (Small Cudweed), on gravelly ground by a derelict building in woodland by the River Clady. *Sasa palmata* (Broad-leaved Bamboo) was running wild in the wood, forming a very extensive patch. Waste ground produced a number of rare non-native species, *Stachys byzantina* (Lamb's-ear) being the second record for the county.

On arrival by ferry from Wales in early June, I explored a large area of waste ground at Rosslare Harbour (T13.12). Here by the thousands were *Spergularia bocconeii* (Greek Sea-spurrey) and *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* (Fourleaved Allseed) and a scattering of *Polypogon monspeliensis* (Annual Beardgrass), all three new county records. The real surprise was seeing *Geranium purpureum* (Little-Robin) amongst the gravel by the railway and on an earth bank, a species that is otherwise only known from Cos Cork and Waterford in Ireland. Later that day I visited the disused railway station at Ballycullane, a stones throw from where I live, where back in March 2011 I thought I had seen the vegetative plants of Little-robin. Sure enough they were this time. Not sure why I had not been back and checked before!

Also in June I added three more new county records: A single plant of *Epilobium x confusilobum* (*E. montanum* x *E. brunnescens*) on the side of a forest road at Prospect (S91.60), growing with both parents. A specimen was sent to T. Pennington the BSBI referee for *Epilobium* who confirmed my identification. In wet woodland on the side of a stream at Ballyhoge (S96.29) I had one clump of *Carex x boeninghausiana* (*C. paniculata* x *remota*) with both parents. On the site of the disused railway station at Wellingtonbridge (S85.13) I had four plants of *Senecio inaequidens* (Narrow-leaved Ragwort). Not a new species for the county, but a new variety was a large patch of *Vicia sepium* var. *ochroleuca* from the verge of the N11 north of Enniscorthy (S97.42). The flowers are cream turning an orange colour with age.

I had a few days in September recording and added a further eight new county records: A single plant of *Atriplex longipes* (Long-stalked Orache) was found on the edge of reeds by Tacumshin Lake, Sigginstown (T06.06). Two days later I was looking for *Atriplex* hybrids at Arhurstown (S71.10) and found *Atriplex x gustafssoniana* (*A. longipes* x *prostrata*) at the top of the beach. No *A. longipes* was growing with the hybrid. One of the nice surprises of the year was finding four fruiting trees of *Crataegus laevigata* (Midland Hawthorn) in a roadside hedge at Bree (S94.32), a rare species in Ireland. A piece of waste ground in Wexford Town (T04.20) had a beautiful flowering self-sown *Clematis tangutica* (Orange-peel Clematis) smothering the thistles and docks. The sepals really do look and feel like orange peel! At Kilmuckridge (T16.41) on some sandy waste ground I had three *Lupinus x regalis* (Russell Lupin (*L. arboreus* x

polyphyllus). Here they were growing with *Filago minima* (Small Cudweed), *F. vulgaris* (Common Cudweed) and *Ornithopus perpusillus* (Bird's-foot). At Ballygortin (T14.43) I had a clump of *Pseudosasa japonica* (Arrow Bamboo) by a pond in a very overgrown wood. A visit to Clone (T01.47) to check on what I thought was a *Berberis vulgaris* (Barberry) I had found back in March came as a surprise as it was *Robinia pseudoacacia* (False-acacia) growing in the field hedge and not a *Berberis*.

I joined Jim Hurley and Paula O'Meara in September for a trip to the Keeragh Islands (S86.05). These are two small islands off of the south coast of Wexford, an SPA with highly restricted access. The dominant species on both islands was *Atriplex prostrata* (Spear-leaved Orache), which more or less shaded out all other species apart from some large stands of *Malva arborea* (Tree-mallow). The most interesting species of the day was several *Polygonum oxyspermum* subsp. *raii* (Ray's Knotgrass).

A short visit home in December managed to add a further three new county records. While driving along I noticed the largest stand of *Muehlenbeckia complexa* (Wireplant) I have ever seen growing wild in a field hedge at Sleadagh (S99.13). Here it was smothering four trees, just like ivy does. I went and checked a site where I had seen *Viola arvensis* (Field Pansy) and *V. tricolor* subsp. *tricolor* (Wild Pansy) growing together earlier in the year at Ballyvalloo (T11.30), and as expected the hybrid *Viola x contempta* was there also. And finally, on some rough ground by the new Tesco at Gorey (T14.59) was one *Bassia scoparia* (Summer-cypress).

The records have been analysed, and like the previous year the northern half of the county is in need of much work to catch up with the recording efforts in the southern half of the county. Of the 96 tetrads with no records prior to 2014, 44 were visited. There are now 195 tetrads with 1-99 species recorded, 243 tetrads with 100-199 species recorded, 144 tetrads with 200-299 species recorded, 44 tetrads with 300-399 species recorded and 9 tetrads with over 400 species recorded. Of the list of 211 species drawn up with no post-2000 records, 16 of these were re-found in 2014, ten of which were native species. It is hoped in 2015 that some more of the species not seen post-2000 will be found again and more of the tetrads with no records will be visited. If you would like to take on a tetrad or try and re-find a species, please do get in touch. More information can be found on my BSBI Wexford web page

at: http://bsbi.org.uk/co_wexford.html. I have also started a blog where I put up photos of the rare species I come across in Wexford. There is a link on my BSBI Wexford page.

A report on fieldwork in Co. Limerick (H8), 2014

Sylvia Reynolds, 115 Weirview Drive, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin

The main aims for fieldwork in Limerick in 2014 were to continue recording for *Atlas 2020* in underworked hectads, preferably at new sites, to add later season records to spring 2013 field cards and to do surveys for the Irish Species Project (ISP). As in 2013, all the fieldwork was done with Julian Reynolds, whose input was again invaluable. We spent some 23 days in the field, mostly very long days because they often had to include the drive from and/or back to Dublin. A selection of the sites we went to and the plants we saw is given below.

The field season started in an unplanned way when Julian and I could not get to Foynes Island on 16 February to check for fallen trees after the big storm. Instead we diverted onto the Cork road and south side of the Galty Mountains, where we needed to check a grid reference for some David Allen *Rubus* records. We took the opportunity to mark our first card along forestry roads in Combaun Wood and down to the river (R82.18), recording 57 species.

We met Eva Sweeney (from Mallow) on 5 April to discuss fieldwork in Limerick and to record west of Kilmallock (R57.27), including *Heracleum mantegazzianum* (Giant Hogweed) by the River Loobagh and *Erophila verna* s.s. (Common Whitlowgrass) on gravel by a house. On 18 April, we carried out ISP surveys of *Lathraea squamaria* (Toothwort) at two sites in Curragh Chase Forest Park (R40.49, R41.50) and one for *Primula veris* (Cowslip) there (R41.49). *P. veris* was also surveyed on 3 May in the SAC beside the limestone quarry at Barrigone (R29.50), where there were literally thousands of plants of it in flower.

A 1999 record of *Arabis hirsuta* (Hairy Rock-cress) on a wall in Hospital was published in the *Flora of County Limerick* (Reynolds 2013). However, belatedly it was realized that the habitat was unlikely and the error should have been picked up when compiling records for the *Flora*. The same wall in Hospital (R70.36) was checked on 3 May, where *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Thale Cress) was

growing with *Saxifraga tridactylites* (Rue-leaved Saxifrage). Undoubtedly the wrong name was crossed off on the field card, *Arabis* instead of *Arabidopsis* – the names are next to each other.

Doubt has also arisen since the *Flora* was published about some records of *Cerastium diffusum* (Sea Mouse-ear) at locations away from the Shannon Estuary. Plants of apparently that species were examined on 3 May where it had previously been recorded in calcareous grassland at Barrigone (R29.50) and just south of Knocklong (R72.30). They were not *C. diffusum*, but rather small plants of *C. glomeratum* (Sticky Mouse-ear). R.LI. Praeger recorded *C. diffusum* (as *C. tetrandrum*) at Lough Gur in 1903 and it would be interesting to check the *Cerastium* there.

Apparent *Prunus padus* (Bird Cherry) along a roadside and at a wood edge north-west of Cappamore (R75.53) was in flower on 4 May. Probably originally planted, it is now establishing itself by suckering. On a return visit on 23 July, no fruits were seen, but the underside of the leaves were examined and the brownish hairs indicated *P. serotina* (Rum Cherry). It will be checked again in 2015.

New sites were botanized in the Limerick part of hectad R66 southeast of O'Briensbridge on 31 May. Conspicuously flowering/fruitletting *Eriophorum angustifolium* (Common Cottongrass) drew our attention to unexpected boggy ground with *Calluna vulgaris* (Heather), *Carex binervis* (Green-ribbed Sedge), *Potamogeton polygonifolius* (Bog Pondweed), *Sphagnum* etc. in a large field in Coolready townland (R67.65). Further along the same road a patch of *Acaena ovalifolia* (Two-spined Acaena) was seen with *Conopodium majus* (Pignut) on a shaded roadside bank near the railway (R67.64). There was quite a lot of dumped rubbish, so perhaps it was a garden discard.

Julian and I nearly didn't go into what seemed like an uninteresting rushy field that day, also in Coolready townland (R67.64) – but luckily we did! As well as the *Juncus* spp., and with *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel) and *Cirsium dissectum* (Meadow Thistle) in more open ground, there was some *Carex pallescens* (Pale Sedge), a rare sedge in Limerick and most of Ireland, except in the north. We returned to the same sites in R66 on 10 July and added to the spring cards, exploring the same rushy field which extends into the adjoining monad (R68.64) and where we recorded this time. *Juncus acutiflorus* (Sharp-flowered Rush) was abundant, with other *Juncus* species including *J.*

bulbosus (Bulbous Rush). Another large tuft of *C. pallescens* was found as well as noticeably hairy *Veronica scutellata* var. *villosa* (Marsh Speedwell) and leaves of a *Pedicularis* (Lousewort). Julian was the first to spot *Sisyrinchium bermudiana* (Blue-eyed-grass) in flower, as he did among *Juncus* in the nearby rushy/boggy field (R67.65). This time, we also noted *Erica tetralix* (Cross-leaved Heath), *Nardus stricta* (Mat-grass), *Eriophorum vaginatum* (Hare's-tail Cottongrass), *Drosera rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Sundew) and *Galium saxatile* (Heath Bedstraw) in the boggy part, including several species new to the hectad. *Lythrum portula* (Water-purslane) formed dense patches in the drainage ditches. We saw *S. bermudiana* for a third time that day where it is known in the unimproved wet meadow at Lacka (R66.64), growing with *C. pallescens*.

The day before a BSBI meeting, Julian and I recorded at several sites in the lowland parts of R81 and R82 in the south-east of the county. The most surprising find was a single plant of flowering *Lathyrus nissolia* (Grass Vetchling) in bare ground with some weedy species by a side road south-east of Galbally (R80.26, 7 June) – how it got there is unknown. On 8 June, eight BSBI members and one visitor met in Kilbehenny and went on to explore bluffs in the Blackrock River valley on the south side of the Galty Mountains. See 'Field meeting reports, 2014', page 52.

After three weeks in Vancouver in June, fieldwork resumed in July. The good rushy and boggy fields in Coolready townland was revisited on 10 July, as mentioned above. Then we recorded on the west side of Castleconnell Bog (R68.63), including *Andromeda polifolia* (Bog-rosemary), *Myrica gale* (Bog-myrtle), *Vaccinium oxycoccos* (Cranberry), *Utricularia minor* (Lesser Bladderwort), *Drosera anglica* (Great Sundew), *D. rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Sundew), fertile *Trichophorum cespitosum* s.s. (Northern Deergrass) and much more of the common *T. germanicum* (Deergrass). Another large tuft of *Carex pallescens* (Pale Sedge) was found by the track bordering the bog (R68.63), where there were also established garden discards such as *Jasminum officinale* (Summer Jasmine) and *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum* (Yellow Archangel). Both *Betula pubescens* (Downy Birch) and *B. pendula* (Silver Birch) occur here. The third *Drosera*, *D. intermedia* (Oblong-leaved Sundew), was later seen on Castleconnell Bog (R68.64) on 22 July.

Part of the following day, 11 July, was spent in under-recorded R73 in the east of the county. There were no really unusual species, but non-native *Lemna minuta* (Least Duckweed) was seen covering the water surface of a deep drainage ditch north of Hospital (R71.37) on one side of a lane, while native *L. minor* (Common Duckweed) covered the water surface in the same ditch on the other side of the lane. *L. minuta* was abundant in a garden pond in Glin (R12.47, 28 September) and it has now been found in eight Limerick hectads, becoming more widespread here as elsewhere in the country.

The fen at Friarstown (R57.49) was last visited in 1997, and more thorough recording was needed. *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed) was still extensive here on 22 July, with some *Cladium mariscus* (Great Fen-sedge) and patches of flowering *Epipactis palustris* (Marsh Helleborine). A large tree of *Rhamnus cathartica* (Buckthorn) was relocated at a field edge near the fen (R57.49), as was *Rubus caesius* (Dewberry) in a field hedgerow and on a nearby roadside (R57.49, R56.49). Leaving the fen for our next planned destination, we had to pass near Tory Hill. It was irresistible to go there instead, with the excuse that post-2000 recording was necessary! Access to the hill is not easy or encouraged, but we found a way in. Many characteristic species occur around the old limestone quarry workings at the north end of the hill (R53.43), including *Anthyllis vulneraria* (Kidney Vetch), *Carlina vulgaris* (Carlina Thistle), *Geranium columbinum* (Long-stalked Crane's-bill), *Koeleria macrantha* (Crested Hair-grass), *Ononis repens* (Common Restharrow), *Origanum vulgare* (Wild Marjoram), *Thymus polytrichus* (Wild Thyme) and *Trisetum flavescens* (Yellow Oat-grass). A *Cotoneaster* is self-sown in that area and becoming established.

As on some other occasions, we overnighted in a hotel in Limerick City and the next day, 23 July, first headed to the north-east of the county to add to cards done in early May. Potentially the most interesting find northwest of Cappamore (R75.53) was a tussocky sedge with poor end-of-season spikelets in formerly boggy ground where forestry had been cut. Having seen specimens, Con Breen agreed that it could be *Carex appropinquata* (Fibrous Tussock-sedge) and, if so, that would be a range extension for this mainly midland sedge – to be checked. *Carex laevigata* (Smooth-stalked Sedge) was growing with *Equisetum fluviatile* (Water Horsetail) at the wet edge of the raised forestry track leading to that boggy ground.

On the way back to Dublin from west Cork on 29 July, a stop was made to record at Bruree. *Potamogeton perfoliatus* (Perfoliate Pondweed) is abundant in the River Maigue there (R54.30), and both *Veronica agrestis* (Green Field-speedwell, R54.30) and *V. polita* (Grey Field-speedwell, R55.30) were seen by a wall and in open ground respectively. The next trip to Limerick was on 2 August, when *Carex pseudocyperus* (Cyperus Sedge) was surveyed for ISP at Glenisca Lough, Curragh Chase (R41.50). Torrential rain prevented any further work that day.

Foynes Island, where Julian and I have a base, has been rather neglected botanically since 2000. To our amusement, several casuals appeared in ground disturbed after work to Barneen cottage the previous year, including *Erucastrum gallicum* (Hairy Rocket) and *Matricaria chamomilla* (Scented Mayweed, R24.52, 3 August). Those two species had also been noted at Barneen in 2003, where mature plants had been discarded after examination several years before. Poisonous *Conium maculatum* (Hemlock) reappeared too after the works (R24.52, 18 May, 3 August), having been deliberately removed when there were young children there in the early 1980s.

While surveying *Vaccinium oxycoccos* (Cranberry) for ISP on the wet bog at Glenbaun in the western uplands (R19.39) on 5 August, apparent *Trichophorum cespitosum* s.s. (Northern Deergrass) was collected and the specimens sent to Jeremy Roberts. He determined it as *T. cespitosum* x *T. germanicum* (*T.* x *foersteri*), a new county record. *Pinguicula grandiflora* (Large-flowered Butterwort) is still quite common on part of the same bog (R20.39). The next day, 6 August, we recorded up the forestry road on the south side of Slievereagh (R71.23) and added to a field card done in April 2013 near Duntryleague (R77.28). *Equisetum telmateia* (Great Horsetail) normally has separate fertile shoots in spring and vegetative shoots later, but among a large stand of vegetative shoots there were several topped by spore-producing cones, which we had never seen before (see photo page 1). Also near the bend in the road west-north-west of Duntryleague was a tall grass at the base of a shaded bank, confirmed by Tom Cope as *Agrostis gigantea* (Black Bent). The only other Limerick record was as a casual at Foynes Port in 2010.

On 12 August, *Mentha x piperita* (Peppermint) was found on the bank of the Killeenagarriff River (R68.56), a tributary of the Mulkear River. The same hybrid was noted by the Mulkear River in the townland of Scart (R66.54) on 3

September, and again by the road to Curragh Chase car park (R40.51) on 21 September. Also on 12 August, we botanized for the first time on the west side of and up Knockroe (R65.47). There is substantial outcrop on the hill top, with *Erica cinerea* (Bell Heather), *Vaccinium myrtillus* (Bilberry), *Polypodium vulgare* s.s. (Polypody), *Sedum anglicum* (English Stonecrop), *Rumex acetosella* (Sheep's Sorrel), *Myosotis discolor* (Changing Forget-menot) etc., and *Pedicularis sylvatica* (Lousewort) and *Polygala serpyllifolia* (Heath Milkwort) in the grazed grassland near the outcrop. Several records made by members of the Botany School of Oxford in 1966 were updated.

Returning to Dublin on 14 August, we stopped in Kilmallock (R60.27) and had a quick look (between showers) at the old town walls, where there was a patch of *Armoracia rusticana* (Horse-radish). A lovely wet field outside the wall had an abundant *Mentha*, probably *M. arvensis* (Corn Mint) from its smell, but its stamens were not exerted. In answer to a query, Ray Harley (pers. comm. 2014) explained that *Mentha* flowers “may be hermaphrodite [both male and female] with exerted stamens or may be female, when the stamens are abortive and usually inserted within the corolla tube. This is very common in *Mentha arvensis*, with the female plants requiring to be crosspollinated”.

Since finding *Epilobium tetragonum* (Square-stalked Willowherb) in Limerick City in 2012 and Rathkeale in 2013, it is now known in two more hectads, at the edge of a field by the Mulkear River (R66.54, 3 September) and on a roadside by a house north-east of Kilmallock (R64.30, 22 September), as well on the outskirts of Limerick City (also R65, see below).

Two field cards done in April 2013 were added to on 5 September. One was north-north-east of Knockaderry (R35.37), where uncommon *Rubus caesius* (Dewberry) was seen at the base of a roadside hedgerow with *Euonymus europaeus* (Spindle) and *Epilobium roseum* (Pale Willowherb) was growing well in soft muddy ground by a lane. The second card (R31.31) included Mahoonagh, with scattered *Conyza floribunda* (Bilbao's Fleabane) in a disused car park, and the graveyard to the east. The graveyard was bordered on one side by a row of *Prunus domestica* (Wild Plum) – the small dark plums were very sweet and good to eat! In the same area were patches of the garden escape *Viola odorata* (Sweet Violet) on the low bank of a shaded lane. A downy Rose had been noted north of Knockaderry (R34.35) in 2013, too early in the season for a reliable identification. On 5 September, fruiting specimens were

collected and shown to Declan Doogue, who agreed it could be recorded as *Rosa sherardii*, “with long pedicels”.

In May 2013, small trees of an odd *Crataegus* (Hawthorn) were flowering in a hedgerow along a side road east-north-east of Feenagh (R44.27) and on 6 September 2014 more specimens, with fruits, were collected. Paul Hackney determined it as the hybrid *C. monogyna* x *C. laevigata* (*C. x media*), “very close to the *C. laevigata* parent”. No doubt it was originally planted.

New sites in Limerick were picked somewhat arbitrarily off the maps, so some places turned out to be unattractive and boring, and others were quite the opposite - even if nothing very unusual was found. An example of the latter on 8 September was an attractive side road and unimproved lowlying wet fields east of Ballylanders, with a good view of the Galty Mountains (R78.24). There were dense patches of *Polypodium vulgare* s.s. (Polypody) on roadside banks, *Rorippa palustris* (Marsh Yellow-cress) in an old weedy and damp farmyard, and *Avena sativa* (Oat) at the entrance to a field with a sign for ‘Marian’s Pony Club’! Later the same day the February card for Combaun Wood (R82.18) was added to, the best plants being *Dryopteris aemula* (Hayscented Buckler-fern) and *Jasione montana* (Sheep’s-bit) on a bank near the river. There was a patch of flowering *Persicaria campanulata* (Lesser Knotweed) beside the entrance to the forestry (R81.18), presumably a garden throw-out.

Polypodium (Polypody) on the estate walls by the main road in Adare (R46.46) was checked on 22 September. The plants were superficially like *P. interjectum* (Intermediate Polypody), but all the plants examined were *P. cambricum* (Southern Polypody) with smaller and thicker fronds than usual. Most had very immature sori, but several had better developed sori with maturing sporangia and diagnostic paraphyses. After stops near Garryfine (R50.28) where *Populus alba* (White Poplar) was established by suckering and north-east of Kilmallock (R64.30) where *Calystegia pulchra* (Hairy Bindweed) was growing through a hedge, we recorded south-east of Glenroe (R74.18). There was a good variety of habitats in that area, including a stream with *Ranunculus penicillatus* (Stream Water-crowfoot). Luxuriantly-growing *Juncus bufonius* (Toad Rush) by the stream was definitely *J. bufonius* s.s. and not the suspected *J. foliosus* (Leafy Rush). The last plant of the day was *Carex spicata* (Spiked Sedge), its large tuft partly damaged by cutting of the grass verge.

With a need to record more weedy species in R65, we went to Ballysimon on the south-east side of Limerick City (R61.55) on 29 September. A large field grazed by horses and with much *Juncus inflexus* (Hard Rush) provided the desired disturbed ground, with *Conyza floribunda* (Bilbao's Fleabane) and *Matricaria chamomilla* (Scented Mayweed). Many more weedy species were found among the neglected shrubberies and borders of a car park, including *Vicia hirsuta* (Hairy Tare), *V. sativa* (Common Vetch), *Mycelis muralis* (Wall Lettuce) and *Epilobium tetragonum* (Square-stalked Willowherb). A surprise was to find *Carex spicata* (Spiked Sedge) so soon again, this time in rough grass with *Agrostis stolonifera* (Creeping Bent), *Elytrigia repens* (Common Couch), *Cirsium arvense* (Creeping Thistle) and *Equisetum arvense* (Field Horsetail). The final record of the year (following a talk on the county's flora to the Limerick Branch of BirdWatch Ireland) was *Conyza floribunda* on open ground at Honan's Quay (R57.57) on 6 November, this species now well established in Limerick City.

I would like to thank Eva and Pascal Sweeney who recorded near Castletown (R44.29) in the mid-south of the county, where they found *Chaenorhinum minus* (Small Toadflax) on 11 May at the ruined creamery. They also found *Epilobium ciliatum* (American Willowherb) there and *Inula helenium* (Elecampane) beside a garden near the creamery on 27 July. *E. ciliatum* is continuing to spread in Limerick and is now known from 24 hectads.

On the whole, it was a good field season. The current standing is that there are records since 2000 towards *Atlas 2020* for over 300 taxa in each of 12 of the 36 Limerick hectads or partial hectads, a further 8 hectads each have records for 250-299 taxa and the remaining 16 hectads have records for 200-249 taxa. Eleven ISP surveys were completed and four null reports. As well as fieldwork, some 28,500 records since 2000 (including 2014) were entered onto Excel (with location names, and mostly monad grid references and exact dates) and sent off to the BSBI for the Distribution Database (DDb).

Reference:

Reynolds, S.C.P. (2013) *Flora of County Limerick*. National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin.

Co. Down (H38) recording in 2014

Graham Day, *Cherry Cottage, 11 Ballyhaft Road, Newtownards,*
Co. Down, BT22 2AW

Monthly field meetings were organised in support of the proposed flora of Co. Down and to make records under the new date-class. Thanks go to John Wann, Ian McNeill and David McCormick who sent records to me.

Several visits were made to the coast at Tyrella, Ballykinler and Inner Dundrum Bay in March, April and early May to record *Cochlearia* taxa. Unfortunately, winter storms had done a lot of damage to the upper shore, particularly along the Ballykinler dunes where erosion was severe. More positively, *Vicia lathyroides* (Spring Vetch) and *Erodium lebelii* (Sticky Stork'sbill) were re-found at Ballykinler.

The first of the monthly field meetings took place at the end of April at Tyrella. Species recorded included *Vicia lathyroides* and *Thalictrum minus* (Lesser Meadow-rue). Paul Hackney also found *Taraxacum oxoniense* and *Equisetum variegatum* (Variegated Horsetail). Also in April, *Soleirolia soleirolii* (Mind-your-own-business) was found in Dundrum village, *Erysimum cheiri* (Wallflower) was seen in full flower on a demesne wall by Warrenpoint and *Crassula tillaea* (Mossy Stonecrop) was found by the entrance to Murlough House. The latter species is now spread widely along tracks and paths within the Murlough reserve.

Recorded within the Murlough NNR in early May were *Vicia lathyroides*, *Teesdalia nudicaulis* (Shepherd's Cress), *Filago minima*, *Cynoglossum officinale* (Hound's-tongue) and *Erodium lebelii*. Killard NNR was visited in late May. *Urtica urens* (Small Nettle) was found on the upper shore at the entrance to the reserve and *Blysmus rufus* (Saltmarsh Flat-sedge) and *Oenanthe lachenalii* (Parsley Water-dropwort) by rock pools to the east. A new location, containing a least a hundred spikes, was found for *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's-tongue). This was particularly pleasing as the plants had been missing from the previously known locations within the reserve for some years despite repeated searches. Healthy populations of *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid), *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *coccinea* (Early Marsh-orchid) and *Neottia ovata* (Common Twayblade) were also seen.

In early June, an attempt was made to find *Vaccinium oxycoccos* (Cranberry) at Cluntagh Bog, its last station in Co. Down and last recorded by Ian Rippey in 2010. This was frustrated by a new, deep, wide water channel dug on three sides of the site with apparent intention of draining the bog. It would be most unfortunate if *V. oxycoccos* were to disappear from Down, but it is not a protected species and subsequently an email to NIEA produced no response. While trying to gain access, I recorded *Dryopteris borreeri*, *Ulmus plotii* (Plot's Elm) and *Alchemilla xanthochlora* (Intermediate Lady's-mantle).

In mid-June, an invitation to record at Castle Espie with the Belfast Naturalists Field Club (BNFC) produced *Atriplex littoralis* (Grass-leaved Orache) and *Geranium lucidum* (Shining Crane's-bill) from the salt marsh and adjoining bank to the west. Within the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) grounds were *Silene dioica* (Red Champion), *Malva moschata* (Musk-mallow), *Dactylorhiza purpurella* (Northern Marsh-orchid) and *Primula veris* (Cowslip). Several *Bromopsis erecta* (Upright Brome) plants were recorded growing on the sea-bank outside the grounds on the following day. Part of the site was landscaped three years ago, and overlies possibly the only chalk exposure in Down. Native species have been reintroduced, and landscaping has produced some anomalies, for example *Bolboschoenus maritimus* (Sea Club-rush) growing at some distance from the shore in a field dominated by *Holcus lanatus* (Yorkshire-fog). Work remains to be done on the conifer plantation and wet woodland. The WWT have undertaken a very positive conservation initiative, and it will be most interesting to see how the site matures.

In early August, I walked along the Carrick Little track into the Annalong valley in the south Mourne. Fields on both sides of the track were suffering intensive agricultural development and sub-soil slurry injections were in progress. This development was taking place in the fields below Slieve Binnian, within the Mourne AONB, and the contrast between brilliant green rye-grass and the muted native flora was unpleasant and by implication, appalling in its effects on wild plants and animals. Subsequently I wrote to the responsible government minister, supplying photographs of the damage, and the response revealed that the designation provides absolutely no protection for the natural environment. Further on, the part of the Annalong valley I was walking through suffered a major fire two years ago and at the time there were reports that the fire had penetrated the peat. As I walked past this area, I noted that on the

drier ground, only the heathers were recovering, and other plants appeared diminished. At Blue Lough I saw that someone had apparently attempted to widen the drainage channel, but seemed to have given up due to the depth of Sphagnum. On climbing Slievelamagan, I noted considerable erosion of the peat, probably due to sheep grazing. However, the walk did produce *Campanula rotundifolia* (Harebell) at 610m, *Selaginella selaginoides* (Lesser Clubmoss) and *Agrostis vinealis* (Brown Bent). Several days later, walking on the Brandy Pad, past the Castles to the south of Slieve Commedagh, I found several plants of *Juniperus communis* subsp. *nana* (Dwarf Juniper) and on Cove Mountain, *Salix herbacea* (Dwarf Willow).

Also in early August, a walk by the shore at Cunningburn in the north of Strangford Lough produced *Atriplex littoralis* and *Veronica agrestis* (Green Field-speedwell) and in the middle of the month, *Bromus secalinus* (Rye Brome) was found by Simmy Island.

A meeting with the BNFC at Kearney in mid-August produced much *Polygonum oxyspermum* (Ray's Knotgrass) and there was some speculation this was increasing. Also found were *Lycium barbarum* (Duke of Argyll's Teaplant), *Saponaria officinalis* (Soapwort), *Juncus ranarius* (Frog Rush), *Glaucium flavum* (Yellow Horned-poppy), *Papaver dubium* (Long-headed Poppy), *Crambe maritima* (Sea-kale), *Crithmum maritimum* (Rock Samphire) and *Mertensia maritima* (Oysterplant).

Selaginella selaginoides, *Pinguicula lusitanica* (Pale Butterwort), *Achillea ptarmica* (Sneezewort) and *Equisetum palustre* (Marsh Horsetail) were found on Slieve Roosley, north of Rostrevor, which was visited in late August.

An overdue visit to Lackan Bog in late August confirmed reports of *Cicuta virosa* (Cowbane), and also produced *Lemna minuta* (Least Duckweed), *Bidens cernua* (Nodding Bur-marigold), *Hypericum humifusum* (Trailing St John's-wort) and *Utricularia vulgaris* sensu lat.

After the BSBI Ireland AGM in mid-September, Jo Whatmough kindly led an excellent meeting at Murlough NNR. *Spergularia rubra* (Sand Spurrey) and *Crassula tillaea* were noted growing along the boardwalk from the car park. Flowering *Gentianella campestris* (Field Gentian) was widespread and a few flowering plants of *Teesdalia nudicaulis* were seen as were dead *Filago minima* stems. A search of the *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort) site was unproductive, but many typical coastal plants were seen including *Euphorbia*

portlandica (Portland Spurge), *E. paralias* (Sea Spurge) and *Thalictrum minus*. On the following day north of Greencastle, *Atriplex littoralis* was in abundance, there were a few *Urtica urens* plants and a single *Lamium amplexicaule* (Henbit Dead-nettle).

In early October part of the Mount Stewart estate that is not normally open to visitors, produced *Heracleum mantegazzianum* (Giant Hogweed), *Erinus alpinus* (Fairy Foxglove), *Oxalis corniculata* (Procumbent Yellow-sorrel), *Ruscus aculeatus* (Butcher's-broom) and *Lemna minuta*.

Field meeting reports, 2014

Blackrock River valley, Galty Mountains, Co. Limerick (H8), 8th June

Led by Con Breen and Sylvia Reynolds, six other BSBI members (Paul Green, Paula O'Meara, Megan Morris, Pat Lenihan, Mike Maunsell and Julian Reynolds) and one visitor (Geoff Hunt) met in Kilbehenny with the aim of exploring bluffs above the Blackrock River at about 500-550 m on the south side of the Galty Mountains.

From where we parked the cars on a narrow dead-end road by the Behanagh River in R86.19, it was about a 3 km walk to the bluffs, continuing along the same road, then up the mountainside. Following a stony track with *Aphanes australis* (Slender Parsley-piert), we passed only one former habitation, where the garden escape *Cymbalaria muralis* (Ivy-leaved Toadflax) was growing on the walls. We marked a card for the tetrad we were passing through, R82K (actually R85.20, R85.21). The mosaic of heathy vegetation with *Calluna vulgaris* (Heather) and acid grassland was well grazed by sheep. Seepage areas added to the diversity, for example, with *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* (Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage), *Montia fontana* (Blinks) and *Ranunculus omiophyllus* (Round-leaved Crowfoot).

Despite the grass being so tightly grazed, Paul Green made two good discoveries on the way to the bluffs, both new to the Limerick part of the Galty Mountains. First he spotted a patch of many tiny plants of *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's-tongue) with fertile spikes (R854.210). This is otherwise a rather rare fern in Limerick, mainly known from the lowlands. A short while later, Paul spotted another rare fern, *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort,

R852.217), last recorded in the vice-county in the northern limestone area in 1904. As the latter was an 'Irish Species Project' plant, we surveyed it. There were 13 fronds of *B. lunaria*, some fertile, in a square metre patch of grassland. Associated species included *Nardus stricta* (Matgrass), *Festuca ovina* (Sheep's-fescue), other grasses, *Carex demissa* (Common Yellow-sedge), *C. pulicaris* (Flea Sedge), *Potentilla erecta* (Tormentil) and *Veronica officinalis* (Heath Speedwell).

There had been intermittent heavy rain on the way up, but the weather started to clear as we picnicked near the base of the bluffs on Knockaterriff, known locally as the 'Black Rocks'. Con had been on those substantial siliceous bluffs the previous year and knew exactly where he wanted to take our group. That involved a scramble up steep wet slopes, clinging to clumps of *Luzula sylvatica* (Great Wood-rush)! A separate list of characteristic species was made for the bluffs in R85.21, starting at R852.219. Nine fern species were recorded including *Asplenium viride* (Green Spleenwort), *A. trichomanes* (Maidenhair Spleenwort, probably subsp. *trichomanes*), *Cystopteris fragilis* (Brittle Bladder-fern) and *Hymenophyllum wilsonii* (Wilson's Filmy-fern), as well as *Huperzia selago* (Fir Clubmoss). Young leaves of *Campanula rotundifolia* (Harebell) and a *Hieracium* (Hawkweed) were seen, and the flowering Saxifrage provoked much discussion – we finally agreed it was convincing *Saxifraga hypnoides* (Mossy Saxifrage). One *Orchis mascula* (Early-purple Orchid) was in flower, as was *Viola riviniana* (Common Dog-violet). There was also *Geranium robertianum* (Herb-Robert) and gone-over *Conopodium majus* (Pignut). Paul Green determined *Pedicularis sylvatica* subsp. *hibernica* (Lousewort) and non-native *Epilobium brunnescens* (New Zealand Willowherb) is established here as it is elsewhere in the Galtys. Just into the next monad R85.22, *Meconopsis cambrica* (Welsh Poppy) was also growing on the same bluffs, a fairly isolated natural and seemingly undisturbed habitat.

On the way back to the cars, we recorded 115 species along the Behanagh River and the unpaved road, its grass verges and banks (R86.19), including *Dryopteris aemula* (Hay-scented Buckler-fern), *Hypericum humifusum* (Trailing St John's-wort), *Lathyrus linifolius* (Bitter-vetch) and *Quercus petraea* (Sessile Oak). Altogether it was an enjoyable and productive meeting, and we ended the day sitting by the river and chatting in the sunshine.

Sylvia Reynolds

Loughabarra Wetland, Co. Laois (H14) 21st June 2014

A bright fine June morning saw a group of 10 botanists visiting Loughabarra on our first hosting of a BSBI fieldtrip in Co. Laois. This site is part of a farm owned by the Talbot family of Ballacolla, who kindly hosted us for the day. The site is in a basin containing diverse wet grassland that frequently floods in winter. The site is split into a wet meadow which adjoins improved grassland and is lightly grazed by cattle in spring and summer and a much wetter rich fen/*Molinia* meadow area which was fenced off many years ago after the father of the present farmer watched on helplessly as one of his bullocks got stuck in the mud literally and was never seen again! This area has never been grazed since (at least 40 years).

The wet meadow was the first habitat to be tackled. This area has never been re-seeded and together with the light grazing regime was therefore in great condition with plenty of species of interest to us botanists. Interestingly Loughabarra is marked as 'bog' on the Bog Commissioners map drawn in the early 19th Century. However, there were none of the more typical signs of old turf-cuttings such as face-banks. The Talbots had no memory of turf being cut from the site although there was some re-collection in Ballacolla village of the last turf being drawn from Loughabarra bog around the time of the First World War.

The meadow was zoned with typical meadow-grasses above a zone of wetter species. Plenty of time was spent separating *Festuca arundinacea* from *Festuca pratensis* and examining other grasses. The wetter area contained species such as *Eleocharis palustris* and a range of species including *Carex panicea*, *C. hirta*, *C. ovalis*, *C. disticha*, *C. hostiana* and *C. nigra* and lots of pretty *Cirsium dissectum* (Meadow Thistle). The boggy (or fenny) nature of the site was indicated by the appearance of *Eriophorum angustifolium* (Common Cottongrass) and *Schoenus nigricans*. It seemed like only 300-400m was covered before it was time for lunch, which was some indication of the relatively diverse grassland with plenty for botanists to see.

Lunch was taken in the hot, bright sunshine of a glorious midsummer day with the occasional visits of Brimstone Butterfly. The adjacent meadow of dense *Molinia caerulea* (Purple Moor-grass) featured frequent, scattered *Rhamnus cathartica* (Buckthorn) bushes and small trees (this infrequent

species seems to have a localised distribution in Laois - while we have only recorded Buckthorn from two sites so far, Brimstone butterfly has appeared at more sites some distance from here, suggesting that more Buckthorn awaits to be recorded). Access was along some recently cleaned drainage ditches and the recent disturbance provided several interesting and unusual species that were colonising both the newly cleaned drain and the spoil on the access track. *Ranunculus sceleratus* (Celery-leaved Buttercup) and *R. trichophyllus* (Thread-leaved Water-crowfoot) were both recorded from this zone as was *Rubus caesius* (Dewberry). The drainage ditches contained species such as *Carex rostrata* (Bottle Sedge), (Lesser Water-plantain), *Schoenoplectus lacustris* (Common Club-rush) and *Alisma plantago-aquatica* (Water-plantain). The *Molinia* meadow was relatively species poor in contrast with the grazed meadow. There were several patches of *Cladium mariscus* (Great Fen-sedge) and some other indicators of rich fen such as *Carex elata* (Tufted-sedge), although historical drainage had obviously had an impact on the extent of the fen. Interestingly no orchids were recorded on the day or during a previous visit. Was this because of the lack of grazing and the rank grassland? The find of the day was *Scutellaria galericulata*. This small plant (Skullcap) had been recorded during a previous visit when it had been excitingly thought to be our first new county record, although further research with the database showed it had been recorded before, but was quite scarce. Deep, wide, newly-cleared ditches separated us from adjacent similar fen habitat that possibly promised a few more species or even some orchids. Ladders had been kindly provided but it was felt that discretion was better than getting stuck in the middle of the ditch. So this territory was left to explore for another day!

A small annex group, not yet exhausted by the hot sun, then had a quick visit to the nearby Granstown Lake Nature Reserve. A previous DNFC visit earlier in the year had, excitingly to us, yielded a species we had not seen before. It had tentatively, but wrongly, been named *Adoxa moschatellina* (Moschatel) based on its leaves, and further reports came of this rare and unusual plant being found at the site by a group from a university some years before. However, the plant which was now in flower turned out to be Meadow-rue (*Thalictrum flavum*), while not as unusual as *Adoxa*, still a new record for us. Thanks to Eamon Gaughan for identifying this species.

Fiona McGowan

Heathland, Kinvara and Shannon callows, SE Galway (H15)
Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th August 2014

The first day was to an extensive area of lowland heath on limestone pavement at Cahercon, SSE of Kinvara, courtesy of Martin and Bernie Jennings. The day was dull, but only in terms of the weather. About a dozen people came from near and far and we spent a happy time recording the species-rich grassy verges of the track into the site, including the locally common *Origanum vulgare* (Wild Marjoram) and *Centaurea scabiosa*

(Greater Knapweed) and using binoculars to identify the latter in a field. We also found *Euonymus europaea* (Spindle), a common hedgerow species in the area. A nice find was *Coeloglossum viride* (Frog Orchid) and on the heathland *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Chalk Fragrant-orchid) was still in flower. *Neottia ovata* (Common Twayblade) was common in shady areas and ferns were abundant, including the less common *Polystichum x bicknellii*, spotted and identified by Paula O'Meara. The heath was an extensive area of limestone grassland, pockets of heathy land and limestone boulders and pavement – with one cave that yielded more ferns at its mouth as well as *Sorbus aria* (Common Whitebeam). *Juniperus communis* (Juniper) shrubs were scattered about and are indicators of interesting Alpine heath and our target species *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (Bearberry). Sadly, we did not find this species, nor even the more frequent *Dryas octopetala* (Mountain Avens) but *Calluna vulgaris* (Heather), *Antennaria dioica* (Mountain Everlasting) and even some *Erica cinerea* (Bell Heather) were frequent. We recorded 161 species, thanks to the variety of habitats.

On Sunday, we focused on the callows SE of Eyrecourt at Muckanagh, where a dyke owned by the ESB enabled us to walk along a canal and down onto the callows without trespassing. Some different people came, while others had left, so we have about a dozen again on this sunnier day. The calcareous grassland had not been cut and was rich in species, including *Daucus carota* (Carrot) and *Avenula pubescens* (Downy Oat-grass). The calcareous banks of a ditch yielded *Achillea ptarmica* (Sneezewort) some *Selaginella selaginoides* (Lesser Clubmoss) and frequent patches of *Parnassia palustris* (Grass-of-Parnassus) that enabled me to fill out an Irish Species Project card. The highlight was when we came across some clumps of *Groenlandia densa*

(Opposite-leaved Pondweed). This protected species is known in the area (found at Meelick in the 1990s on a BSBI outing), but this is a new station for it. When we finally got to the Shannon flood-meadows, we were able to locate the locally common *Stellaria palustris* (Marsh Stitchwort) as well as *Thalictrum flavum* (Common Meadow-rue). We found a total of 142 species.

Micheline Sheehy Skeffington

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Irish branch of the
Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland
Hilliard House, Castlewellan, Co. Down Saturday
13 September 2014**

(Unapproved)

In the Chair: Gerry Sharkey

The Chair welcomed the attendees and thanked John Faulkner for arranging the venue, and Jo Whatsmough for agreeing to lead the field trip in the afternoon.

Apologies

Jonathan Shakleton, Paul Green, Stephen Ward, Rodger Goodwillie, John Conaghan, Catroina Brady, Sharon Parr, Zoë Devlin, Danial Kelly and Sylvia Reynolds.

Minutes AGM 2013

The Minutes of the BSBI Irish AGM 2013 were read by the Honorary Secretary and proposed and accepted by Caroline Mhic Daeid and Micheline SheehySkeffington.

Matters arising

John Faulkner announced that preliminary contact had been made with the NIEA and NPWS with the object of establishing support for the position of Irish Officer, similar to that provided by country authorities in the UK to finance the BSBI Officers for Wales and Scotland.

Chairman's and /Hon. Secretary's Report 2013/2014

The Committee for Ireland met on three occasions during 2013/2014, 26th October, 2013 in the County Museum, Armagh, on 25th January 2014, in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin and on 23rd April 2014 again in the County Museum, Armagh.

Field Meetings

John Faulkner, the Field Meeting Secretary, arranged a programme of nine field meetings for the year, and also the meeting following this AGM. They included Cos Antrim, Down and Armagh in the north, Sligo, Limerick and Galway (**H17** and **H15**) in the west and Westmeath and Laois in the midlands and there is still Co Wexford to look forward to in November in the south.

Our thanks go to John for his work in arranging these meetings which are such an integral and enjoyable part of the BSBI calendar.

The Work of the Committee for Ireland, 2013/2014 The Irish Species Project

Details of the Irish Species Project (ISP) were circulated to VCRs and work began this year. The ISP is a study of the current status of eight species of significance in the Irish flora, aiming to target known sites and collect current data there and at other new sites. It has been taken up with enthusiasm by most VCRs. A full report on progress of the project will be given by John Faulkner.

Members Conference

A conference of BSBI recorders, members and friends was held in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin in March which was very well attended and was a great success. Irish Officer Maria Long, who will include more information in her report, was assisted by members of CFI in arranging and administering the Conference, and we wish to acknowledge with thanks the whole-hearted participation and support of BSBI President Ian Denholm, and all the BSBI officers, personnel and members from all parts of Great Britain and Ireland who attended, gave presentations and workshops and helped throughout the Saturday and Sunday, and during the MapMate training sessions on the Friday.

During the Conference on the Saturday evening a small exhibition of BSBI memorabilia, some short presentations and a celebratory meal took place

in the Gardens to celebrate 50 years of BSBI in Ireland. Members made substantial inroads into no less than two birthday cakes despite first getting through their meal. The very enjoyable evening ended with addresses from Ian Denholm and Director of the National Botanic Gardens Matthew Jebb, who also led us on a tour of the gardens to bring the weekend to a close on Sunday evening. Our thanks to Matthew and his staff for all the facilities placed at our disposal throughout the weekend.

New Irish Vascular Plant Red List

Data have been supplied as requested to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for this project, with the agreement that the data cannot be used for any other purpose than directly in connection with the project. Our representative on the Steering Group awaits further developments.

Flora of Connemara and the Burren

Cambridge University Press confirmed that all legal and copyright issues have now been resolved satisfactorily and the extra chapter, brief memorials of Maura Scannell by Matthew Jebb and of David Webb by Daniel Kelly are complete, and an index to help readers reconcile nomenclature with Stage 3 has also been prepared, so it is hoped that the *Flora of Connemara and the Burren* will be available on CUP's print to order scheme within weeks.

Atlas 2020

Many recorders and members have begun recording for Atlas 2020, and with the support of the BSBI we hope to be able to contribute at least as good coverage of the flora of Ireland as was made to the last Atlas project, though this will not be easy.

CFI Changes

Under our constitution Committee members serve for a maximum of five years consecutively in most circumstances. This rule, as well as the need to give committee experience to more BSBI members, has resulted in a major change of CFI personnel being proposed for election this year. We hope members will approve the proposal to appoint 4 completely new members to the committee.

Our thanks to all committee members especially those whose term in office is ending at the end of this month.

Vice-county Recorder changes

The Committee discussed improving the procedures required for appointing new VCRs and how to develop new recorders. We would greatly welcome your ideas on this important subject. The role of the recorder is not simply to go out ticking off species lists, but should also involve attempting to improve all aspects of botanical knowledge in their areas. Many of our recorders are no longer in the first flush of youth, but we should be eager to recruit assistants to help record the flora and not easily discard the experience and skill of the current team.

Publications

The Committee wish to thank Paul Green for his sterling work in producing *Irish Botanical News* 24, March 2014 which was, as always, up to his high standard.

Finally, after such a busy year, we wish to thank the Committee for its support and hard work. It is much appreciated. We also wish to thank the County Museum Armagh, the Armagh Philosophical Society and the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin for accommodating our Committee meetings. The NBG also kindly host the Irish Officer, Dr Maria Long and again we are in its debt.

Fiona Devery - Honorary Secretary, BSBI Committee for Ireland

Gerard Sharkey - Chair, BSBI Committee for Ireland

Report from Irish Officer for Irish Officer

The Irish BSBI Members Conference dominated a lot of the year (from Oct 2013 to Apr 2014). This was a huge success, and so while the amount of time spent preparing for it was much more than envisaged, it was well worth it – in terms of creating a dynamic atmosphere, welcoming new faces, reinvigorating vice-county recorders, celebrating all that the BSBI recorders have achieved in Ireland over the last 50 years, training (in technology, in tricky species groups), etc.

Arising from the conference there has been interest from members in helping with recording. As a result, an informal local group has been going out recording in north Co. Dublin (an area identified by the recorder for the group as needing work). Rather unintentionally, I have ended up spearheading this group – but largely just from a logistics point of view. Also following the conference, members have accompanied the Wicklow recorder on ISP (Irish Species Project) recording events.

East Donegal has been vacant for some time, but there are now two young recorders helping out there. The nearby West Donegal VCR (vice-county recorder) Ralph Sheppard is mentoring them, and they are all getting off to a great start. Other neighbouring VCRs Robert Northridge and Ian McNeill are also helping out. I have been facilitating, introducing, supporting as much as possible.

Presumably due to our improved web presence (Irish web page, Facebook page and Twitter account, as well as dedicated email address for Irish Officer), there have been numerous contacts from members of the public. Often these have proved valuable in terms of recorders learning of new sites, as well as data submission (e.g. for ISP).

I am constantly updating the Irish web page (e.g. next field meeting, updates on projects), the Irish Facebook page (mainly photos after outings, notice before outings, etc.) and I am dipping my toe into the world of Twitter sometimes also!

The Irish Species Project (ISP) was launched at the Irish BSBI Members Conference in March 2014. I was involved in helping develop the species list, the guidelines, etc., and I continue to be involved in terms of promoting it (though there is lots to be done on this front in 2015) and in terms of receiving data from recorders.

I have been compiling material for a bumper Irish VCR Newsletter (April issue was missed!) which will go out to recorders in October/November 2014.

Behind the scenes I have been involved in exploratory talks and negotiations to try to source some extra funding to cover extra days work for the Irish Officer. Nothing concrete to report!

With the very low, and falling, membership numbers in N.I. in mind, I have liaised with an interested member who has volunteered some time, in the hope of doing some publicity and profile raising, specifically aimed at N.I.

Various other admin tasks such as reviewing Employee Handbook, feeding into a 'person specification' for the I.O. (Irish Officer) role, have also taken time.

I have written a book review and a piece for BSBI News.

I am continuing to support one Irish VCR with scanning of recording cards with a view to a third party doing data entry. This is progressing, albeit slowly.

Election of the Committee for Ireland

As unopposed, the standing Vice-Chair John Faulkner is elected Chair of the CFI.

Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington was proposed as Vice-chair by Gerry Sharkey and seconded by John Faulkner.

Caoimhe Muldoon was proposed by Gerry Sharkey and seconded by Caroline Mhic Daeid.

Paula O'Meara was proposed by Gerry Sharkey and seconded by Caroline Mhic Daeid.

John Conaghan was proposed by Gerry Sharkey and seconded by Caroline Mhic Daeid.

Robert Northridge was proposed by Gerry Sharkey and seconded by Caoimhe Muldoon.

Joanne Denyer was proposed by Gerry Sharkey and seconded by Maria Long.

The Chair then brought to the attention of the members that the Constitution of the CFI states that "a member may continue to be elected on to the Committee for a maximum Committee membership of five consecutive years in total." The "in total" is problematic as it may exclude able members from serving a second term having once served a five year term.

He suggested that this will require a change to the Constitution, a change that needs to be approved by the new BSBI Board of Trustees, who are in the process of reviewing all aspects of the rules governing all BSBI 'standing committees', and any proposals should await the completion of that work.

The Chair elect John Faulkner thanked Gerry Sharkey, both personally and on behalf of the Committee, for his work as Chairman during the previous important two years of the CFI. These included the first two years of the Irish Officer post and the Members Conference and 50th Anniversary of the BSBI in Ireland.

Reports from VCR's

Reports from their Vice-counties were given by:

Caroline Mhic Daeid (**H1 & H2**), Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington (**H15**), Ralph Sheppard (**H35**), Ian McNeill (**H36**), Graham Day (**H38**), David McNeill (**H39**).

AOB

No other business was outstanding.

Closing

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked the Committee for their work during the year and especially John Faulkner, Maria Long and Fiona Devery.

Gerry Sharkey, Chair, BSBI Committee for Ireland

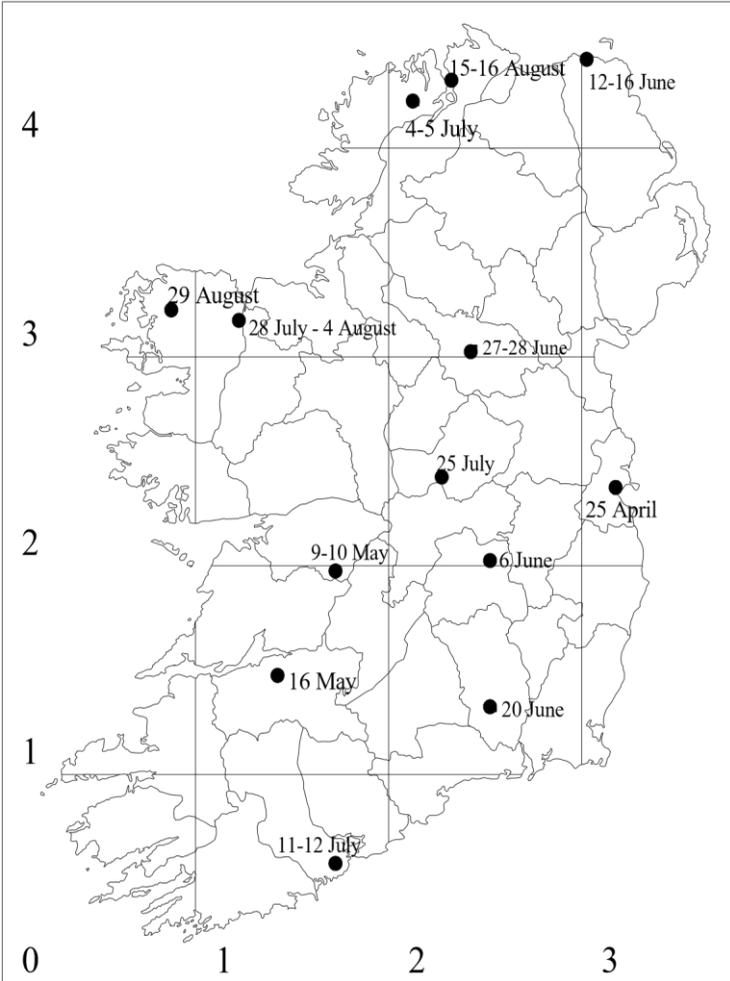
Fiona Devery, Honorary Secretary, BSBI Committee for Ireland

Contributions intended for *Irish Botanical News* No. 26

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Map showing location of meetings to be held during 2015.
 See page 5 of IBN, BSBI Yearbook 2015 or BSBI Webpage for
 more information



Paula O'Meara
looking at
Trifolium scabrum
(Rough Clover),
Carnivan Head,
Co. Wexford.

Photo: P. Green ©
2014. See page 37.



Clematis tangutica
(Orange-peel Clematis).
Waste ground, Wexford
Town. Photo: P. Green
© 2014. See page 39.



Loughbarra Wetland, 21 June. Photo: F. McGowan © 2014. See page 53.



Cyrtomium falcatum, Ely Place, Dublin. Photo: R. McMullen © 2014. See page 20.



Image courtesy of Glengarriff Nature Reserve, Co. Cork. See page 9.