

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF THE BRITISH ISLES

WELSH REGION BULLETIN

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Cardiff, January, 1976



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, GREGYNOG, 1975

Report by Hon. Secretary

The thirteenth A.G.M. of the Welsh Region was held at Gregynog Hall, near Newtown, on Saturday July 12th 1975.

In the absence of Mr. S.G. Harrison, on tour in Russia, Mr. G. Wynne acted as Chairman. Attending members (25) were entranced by two very stimulating talks illustrated by colour slides. First, Dr. S.D. Ward, of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, spoke about limestone pavements, describing particularly their origin, distribution and specialised flora. Later, after the business section, Mr. C.A. Sinker gave an illustrated talk entitled "Cliff and Scree Plants in the Welsh Borderlands". Both lectures included many illustrations from Welsh localities and provoked lively sessions of questions and discussion. We are most grateful to Dr. Ward and Mr. Sinker for such relevant, informative and stimulating contributions.

During the business session, which was sandwiched between the talks, the Hon. Sec. reported on the activities of the past year. He thanked the leaders of the Welsh Region Field Meetings (i) Misses Pugh and Hignett who conducted members around the Welshpool wetlands (ii) Mr. T.G. Evans for the Wye Valley Woodlands Excursion. The care taken in the preparation and leadership of field meetings was undoubtedly greatly appreciated by members, as both meetings had been well attended.

Following Dr. Seddon's report on the Welshpool section of the Shropshire Union Canal last year. Mr. R. Woods of the Nature Conservancy Council had spent much time in researching this perennial problem. Some progress had been made; further surveys were anticipated and in due course help with certain management problems might be sought from Welsh Region members in the Welshpool area.

Research was begun, at the Newbridge Field Centre of U.W.I.S.T. into the ecology of Scleranthus perennis at Stanner Rocks.

The Committee have kept in touch with developments at Llyn Brianne and the proposed new reservoir at Craig Goch

Publication of the Bill for the Protection of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants was welcomed. The assembly of a collection of coloured slides of Welsh plants and plant communities by the Botany Department of the National Museum of Wales was noted. It was brought to the attention of members that voucher specimens for new vice-county records from all parts of Wales should be sent to the National Museum of Wales.

Editions Nos. 21 and 22 of Welsh Region Bulletin had appeared and the editors Mrs. I.M. Vaughan and Mr. S.G. Harrison were warmly thanked for their efforts.

The death of Miss V.J. Macnair, for many years a dedicated member of the Welsh Region Committee, was noted with sorrow.

Following the election of officers and members the composition of the Welsh Region Committee for 1975-76 is as follows:-

Chairman	Mr. S.G. Harrison
Vice-Chairman	Mr. G. Wynne
Secretary	Mr. M. Porter
Minutes Secretary	Mr. M.E. Massey
Senior Committee Members:	Dr. J.G. Duckett Mr. S.B. Evans Mrs. M.E.R. Perry Dr. J.P. Savidge
Junior Committee Members:	Dr. M.E. Gillham Miss A. Powell Mrs. D.E.M. Paish Mrs. P.A. Parr Mrs. I.M. Vaughan Mr. T.A.W. Davis

After dinner there was a small informal exhibition of herbarium specimens, in which the critical genera of Rosa, Rubus and Hieracium figured prominently, and a selection of coloured slides was admired.

On Sunday members assembled early for a visit to Breidden Hill led by Mr. C.A.Sinker and, after lunch, some recording was done in the Corndon and Roundton Hills, where some interesting plant communities were observed. We are most grateful to Mr. Sinker for all his help.

Annual General Meeting, 1976

Details of the programme for the 1976 Welsh Region A.G.M. are unfortunately not yet complete. Please note the date : July 10th. The full programme will be circulated later in the Spring.

Programme of Field Meetings, 1976.

Saturday 22nd May Glamorgan Heritage Coast.

Leaders: Dr. M.E. Gillham
 Mr. A.R. Perry

Meet: Southerndown beach Car Park,
 Dunraven Bay (885 727)

 at 11 a.m.

Some interesting coastal plant communities, including such plants as Purple Gromwell, Bee Orchid, Woolly Thistle and Maidenhair fern, will be seen.

Saturday 12th June Strumble Head, Pembrokeshire

Leaders: Mr. T.A.W. Davis
 Mr. S.B. Evans

Meet: Pwll Deri Car Park (893 385)

 at 11.a.m.

Sea-cliff vegetation will be studied: special plants include Genista pilosa, Veronica spicata and Asplenium billotii. Please note that prior booking, through the Hon. Sec., is essential as special transport arrangements must be made for this field meeting.

Sunday July 11th

Field Meeting associated with the
A.G.M.

Details will be circulated with the A.G.M. programme.

For further details of field meetings please apply to :
Michael Porter, Ynys Villa, Llangynidr, Crickhowell, Powys.

A Note on Sorbus torminalis from -

Sylva or a Discourse on Forest-Trees and the Propagation
of Timber in His Majesties Dominions by John Evelyn Esq. 1664.

Introduction

"I distribute them, therefore, into these two Classes, the Dry and the Aquatic; both of them applicable to the same civil uses of Building, Utensils, Ornament, and Fuel; for to dip into their Medicinal virtues is none of my Province.

Amongst the Dry, I esteem the more principal, and solid, to be the Oak, Elme, Beech, Ash, Chess-nut (Castanea sativa) Wall-nut &c. The less principal, the Service, Maple, Lime-tree, Horn-beam, Quick-beam (Sorbus aucuparia) Birch, Hasel &c. together with all their sub-alternate, and several kinds".

"Chap. IX Of the Service"

"The Service is rais'd of the Sorbs, or Berries, which being ripe (that is rotten about September, may be sown like Beech-mast; It is reported that the Sower never sees the fruit of his labour; either for that it bears only being very old; or that Men are commonly So before they think of planting Trees: But this is an egregious mistake; for these come very soon to be Trees, and being planted young thrive exceedingly; I have likewise planted them as big as my arm successfully: The best way is therefore to propagate them of Suckers or Sets; they delight in reasonable good ground, rather inclining to cold than over hot; for in places which are too dry they never bear kindly.

The timber is useful for the Joyner, and being of a very delicate Grain, for divers Curiosities: Also it is taken to build with, yielding Beams of considerable substance: The shade is beautiful for Walks. and the Fruit not unpleasant, and in some cases Medicinal".

The distribution of Sorbus torminalis in Evelyn's day would seem to have required no mapping exercise. Perhaps some men, not very old, may see fit to plant more, in places not over hot.

I.M. Vaughan.

ARTHUR EDWARD WADE M.Sc., F.L.S.

On the 22nd November 1975, Arthur Wade celebrated his 80th birthday. On the preceeding day, his colleagues in the Department of Botany, National Museum of Wales, held an informal party in his honour at which he received (amongst other things) a very large number of cards and individual letters of congratulation, many from members of this Society. One of his cards was signed by our President and members of Council.

Wade was born in Leicester, where he developed an interest in field botany at an early age, beginning an hortus siccus when he was eight or nine. He made use of Leicester Museum's herbarium and benefited from the guidance of A.R.Horwood on field trips with other boys from the local Grammar School, forming a group which became known as 'Horwood's Boys'.

Wade became an apprentice compositor with a local printing firm but due to injury to his right elbow received in France in 1917 he had to look for a different career and in 1920 he became an Assistant in the herbarium of the Botany Department at the National Museum of Wales, in Cardiff. During the next 55 years he made (and continues to make) a major contribution to Welsh botany. In 1958 he received the honorary degree of Master of Science from the University of Wales in recognition of his work. The Welsh National Herbarium has specimens he collected in 1910 and others dated 1975, with many thousands in between. Most of his collecting was done in Wales, after his early years in Leicestershire. He also collected in many parts of the British Isles and on three recent visits to New Zealand. He retired from his post as Assistant Keeper in 1961 but as an Honorary Research Associate he has continued to work both in the herbarium and in the field. His 'Flora of Monmouthshire' was published by the Museum in 1972. 'Welsh Flowering Plants', with H.A.Hyde (Keeper of Botany, 1922-1962) as co-author, was first published in 1934. A third edition is in the course of preparation.

Hyde and Wade also wrote 'Welsh Ferns', probably the most useful book on British Ferns from its first publication in 1940 to edition 5 (1969), now nearly out of print. Whether field recording for the Flora of Glamorgan, with the agility of someone thirty years younger, or doggedly checking innumerable old records, he shows constant dedication. He joined the Botanical Society and Exchange Club, now the Botanical Society of the British Isles, in 1915, and was elected an Honorary Member in 1962. He was made an Honorary Member of the Field Studies Council in recognition of his distinguished services to it. His botanical interests are by no means confined to vascular plants: he is a founder member of the British Lichen Society and was its Secretary until 1963 and its President in 1964/65. He is also an accomplished bryologist. Welsh botany has been lucky to have Arthur Wade as its adopted son.

S.G.Harrison.

The Hunt Institute Portrait Collection.

In 1972 the Hunt Botanical Library published a book called 'Biographical Dictionary of Botanists', which lists over 11,000 botanists, past and present, whose portraits with short biographical notes are deposited at the Library. The names of botanists living in Wales are almost completely absent from the list. The aim of this note is to draw attention to the existence of this portrait collection and to urge as many of you as possible to deposit your photographs in it.

The collection was started by Mr. & Mrs. Roy Arthur Hunt who, in 1961, established the Rachel McMaster's Miller Hunt Botanical Library, recently renamed the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Mrs. Hunt had gathered together a small collection of some 400 portraits mainly of deceased botanists. This had grown to over 17,000 by 1972. The collection is not limited to photographs and biographical notes of well known botanists but also includes those of the lesser known botanists of regional and local importance from all over the world. It is information about these botanists that in the past has often proved difficult or impossible to obtain.

G.H.M. Lawrence wrote in 1965 *"... we want photographs and biographical information of every botanist, the amateur and the professional, the microbiologist and the phanerogamist, the mycologist and the histologist, of the big-shot and, at all times of the little fellow. We invite the voluntary contribution of these materials and information, for if our effort is to be of service, the effectiveness of our service will depend wholly on the completeness of our records".

All members of the Welsh Region of the B.S.B.I. should be included in this portrait collection. All you have to do is to fill in the copy of the Biographical Data Sheet included with this note and send it with your portrait to Mr. Theodore W. Bossert, Curator of Portraits, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213, U.S.A. Should you have in your possession photographs of any deceased botanist please send them along as well. If you do not have a photograph that the Institution can retain, they will be pleased to copy any print, negative or colour transparency and return the original.

The biographical details in the collection are available on request and copies of the photographs may be obtained at nominal cost. The only conditions are that for photographs of living persons, their written permission must accompany each request and if the photograph is copyrighted, permission for its use must be obtained from the copyright holder.

It would be nice to think that when the next edition of the Biographical Dictionary of Botanists' is published it will contain many more names of botanists living in Wales.

* Archives of Portraiture and Biography in the Hunt Botanical Library; Proceedings of the West Virginia Academy of Science; 37; 1965.

Gwynn Ellis.
National Museum of Wales.

