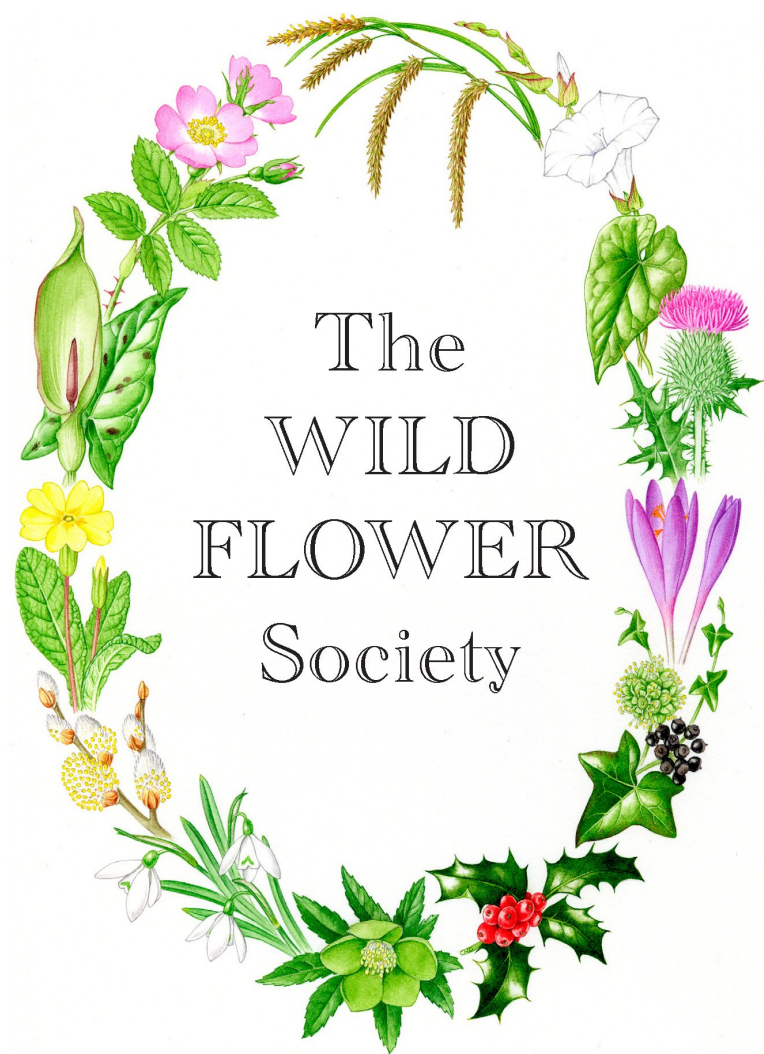


WILD FLOWER MAGAZINE



SUMMER 2026

WILD FLOWER MAGAZINE

Published four times a year by The Wild Flower Society

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I expect that when most of us begin to show an interest in wild flowers, we soon adopt favourite floras or other sources from which we start to extend and improve our knowledge. For me, it was the *Collins Pocket Guide to Wild Flowers*, written by two great supporters of the WFS, David McClintock and Richard Fitter, and first published in 1956. The arrangement of its illustrations by colour of the flowers may have seemed rather unscientific but it was an easy entry point for the novice. Coupled with its novel device of a star system to indicate relative rarity, it certainly hooked me. In those early days, I felt awed by the top category of three-star rarities and dreamed of getting to see at least some of them. Bit by bit, I started to become familiar, in theory at first, and then in practice, with those honeypot locations where exceptional numbers of such special plants could be found, such as on the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall, around Hatchet Pond in the New Forest, on Widdybank Fell in Teesdale, on the Great Orme in North Wales and on Ben Lawers in the Scottish Highlands. I have been to them all now and would be happy to return to each one for their heady mix of species, but also because there are always a few things that elude one as a recorder, Snow Pearlwort *Sagina nivalis* on Ben Lawers being a particular bugbear even after three visits there.

However, for all sorts of reasons, the opportunity to get to these places will not come to all of us and I wanted to highlight that this does not necessarily mean that you will miss

out on that wonderful feeling of visiting a really special place for plants. Two of those that have given me most pleasure and excitement have been right on my doorstep in Cambridge and concern some disused railway sidings and a couple of flooded arable fields. The first of these are the old Chesterton Sidings, on the northern rim of Cambridge city, an extensive area largely abandoned at the end of the twentieth century and to which locals (partly youngsters up to no good I expect, but dog walkers as well) soon started to get unofficial access. In the early 2000s, Graham Easy made detailed recordings across the Sidings and the then County Recorder, Gigi Crompton, mentioned his finds to me and indicated where I could discreetly enter the site. I went and was blown away; it was a treasure trove of botanical diversity. When I came away from the site later that first day to walk back into Cambridge, for the



Hoary Mullein

first and perhaps only time in my life, I understood what people mean when saying that they feel as if they are 'walking on air'. The flora was exceptionally rich, a mixture of both natives and aliens, with for example six species of mullein (*Verbascum* spp.), including a very large population of Hoary Mullein *V. pulverulentum*, plus many of their possible hybrid combinations. There were unusual brambles, a large number of cotoneasters, including the first British record for Glaucous

Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster glaucophyllus*, which has subsequently become locally abundant on the site. A population of Jersey Cudweed *Laphangium luteoalbum* was a particular surprise, as this was before the recent explosion in its distribution witnessed now in many urban landscapes. Of course, such places do not stand still and over the years large parts have become scrubbed up and a dense woodland has developed, composed mainly of willows, poplars, alders and birches, all probably blown in as seed on the wind. These too have proved worth looking at carefully as they include unusual hybrids such as *Alnus x elliptica*, the cross between our native Alder *A. glutinosa* and the introduced Italian Alder *A. cordata*. The Sidings continue to be one of those places that seem inexhaustible, as each time I visit, new plants come to light and other botanically-minded visitors have reported further novelties. Even after more than twenty-five years, and the gradual redevelopment of much of the site, new plants are still turning up - Little Robin *Geranium purpureum*, Spring Cinquefoil *Potentilla verna*, the hybrid between Dewberry *Rubus caesius* and Raspberry *R. idaeus* and

Gmelin's Willow *Salix gmelinii* being just a few that have delighted me and many WFS visitors in the last few years.

The diversity of such brownfield sites is now better appreciated and extends to many other groups of organisms besides flowering plants and ferns. Their conservation can be difficult to manage as, without intervention, the communities are constantly changing. In this case, a lot of the woody growth on the Sidings was eventually cleared away preparatory to development, but the latter still has some way to go and the cleared areas have had a whole new lease of life in the last few years. Urban botany of this sort has begun to attract quite a following and I would recommend that, if you have the chance to botanise on such a site, you may be richly rewarded. If you want some further reading, I would recommend Trevor Dines' *Urban Plants* (published by Bloomsbury Wildlife in 2025) as an enthusiastic, wide-ranging introduction to the subject. As to the excitements of the flooded fields I mentioned earlier, I will keep these to describe in a future letter.

ALAN LESLIE

EDITORIAL

It's been another quite difficult issue to contend with. During March, my long-time email address had been seriously 'hacked' leaving me no alternative but to change it to a new one. Please note this is now ken.c.southall@gmail.com

Please also note, for the first time the old-style 'letter' reference for each

Branch area has been dropped. I was hoping to include the first of the three reports of the Menorca meetings in this issue, but sadly lack of room prevented this. See page 50 for a taster of what is to come.

Don't forget to send me your photographs for the AGM Photographic Competition.

KEN SOUTHALL

NOTICES

NOTICE OF THE WILD FLOWER SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

This year's AGM will be held on Saturday, September 5th 2026 at 2pm in the Hayling Island Community Centre, Station Road, Hayling Island, PO11 0HB.
what3words: polices.daunting.pits

Robin Blades will be retiring as Treasurer at the AGM and Steve Little and Barbara Lewis will be retiring as General Committee Members, both having both completed their 4 year terms. The remaining members of the Executive Committee are all willing to stand for re-election to their current posts, as permitted by the Aims and Rules of our Society.

We have had nominations for all 3 vacancies. (See the AGM agenda for details.) Should there be any other nominations, for these, or other, committee posts, the General Secretary must receive them in writing, not less than two weeks before the relevant AGM.

The AGM 2026 agenda and full details of the Members Weekend are contained in the insert accompanying this magazine.

To book, contact Janet John by email wfs.meetings@gmail.com or by phone 01753 884490. Please do this by July 31st.

I am available to help with enquires; email; wfs.secwfsociety@gmail.com. or 07786 782224 (no land-line).

The Branch Secretaries' Meeting will be held in advance of the AGM, by Zoom, on September 2nd at 7pm. Details will be circulated to the Secretaries before then.

CAROL ARMSTRONG, General Secretary.

CHECKING THE WILD FLOWER SOCIETY'S ACCOUNTS

Due to the retirement of our current auditor, Bob Holder, we need someone to scrutinise our annual accounts who is not a Wild Flower Society trustee or relative of a trustee.

Because we have a relatively small annual income, we do not need anyone to be qualified as an auditor or be an accountant. The Charity Commission calls this process independent examination of accounts. Wild Flower Society accounts are simple Receipts and Payments accounts prepared on a cash

basis and this checking of our accounts is a job done once a year only in early Spring.

These are the tasks and independent examiner needs to do:

- reviews the charity's accounts and accounting records provided by the treasurer,

- checks that the accounts are consistent with those records, looks for anything obviously wrong or unusual,

- confirms that our simple Receipts and Payments accounts comply with Charity Commission rules.

The independent examiner does **not** need to carry out the detailed testing and verification required in a statutory audit.

If everything appears correct, the examiner then signs an **Independent Examiner's Report** which is included with the annual accounts.

If you think you could help the Wild Flower Society by volunteering to be our independent examiner of our accounts then please contact Carol Armstrong (wfs.secwfssociety@gmail.com), Peter Llewellyn (wfs.chair@gmail.com) or Robin Blades (wfs.finances@gmail.com)

THE ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The photographic competition has always been an integral part of the Members' Weekend although you do not have to attend the AGM to participate. As a reminder, the categories are: -

Habitat: A photograph of a plant or plant community within its environment or locality.

Plant Portrait: A photograph of a plant that illustrates its uniqueness while at the same time revealing something of its character.

Close-up: A photograph that reveals, in a more scientific way, the uniqueness of a plant by means of a close-up photograph.

Foreign Fields: A photograph of a plant or plant community that can **clearly seen** to be growing in a foreign country.

Human Element: A photograph that concentrates on botanical personalities and/or their activities. Please ask any person involved for their permission before submitting the picture.

Please note, in classes 1-3, the plants photographed must be wild and growing in the British Isles.

Digital - jpegs at full resolution - must be submitted to and received by Ken Southall no later than Monday 10th August 2026. Please refer to the 2025 Yearbook (pages 27 and 28) and/or the Wild Flower Society Website for full details of how to submit your entries.

Ken's email is: ken.c.southall@gmail.com (please note my new address).

The 2026 password for the Members' page of the website is [beeorchid77](#).
Copy deadline: 1st September for the Autumn 2026 magazine.
Uncredited photographs in this magazine are by Ken Southall.

BRANCH and 1km SQUARE STUDY REPORTS FOR 2025

KENT including 1km SQUARE STUDY

Cumulative	New	Total
José Gibbs	33	589
Claire Horder	83	910

Having just taken over Kent Branch from Geoffrey Kitchener, it was a pleasure for me to receive diaries from José and Claire who are fellow members of Kent Botanical Recording Group (KBRG). Both benefitted from attending group meetings in Kent and both travelled much further afield to obtain some of their 2025 records.

José enjoyed an August holiday in Orkney where she has been before, but this time flower hunting was somewhat curtailed as she was joined by her family who do not share her enthusiasm for plants. However, Scots Lovage *Ligusticum scoticum*, Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, Hybrid Woundwort *Stachys x ambigua* and Wild Pansy *Viola tricolor* were welcome additions to her cumulative list. Missing out on Scottish Primrose *Primula scotica* was a disappointment and probably due to the hot dry summer. Whilst on the islands José was pleased to obtain a copy of the pocket edition of *The Orkney Book of Wildflowers* by

Tim Dean and Ann Bignall, published by The Orcadian. At just £10.99, she recommends it to anyone planning a visit. José co-led a KBRG meeting on the north Kent coast where a highlight was Hog's Fennel *Peucedanum officinale*, an impressively large umbel with a limited distribution in the Thames estuary on both Kent and Essex sides. Sweet Scabious



Common Gromwell

Scabiosa atropurpurea had colonised a stretch of sea wall and **José** added Common Saltmarsh-grass *Puccinellia maritima* and Tall Fescue *Schedonorus arundinaceus* to her growing list of grass species. Common Gromwell *Lithospermum officinale* and Zigzag Clover *Trifolium medium* were new discoveries for her as she travelled around the county.

Most of **Claire's** new records were made on a three-day WFS meeting to Angus and Fife where her favourite plant was Creeping Lady's-tresses *Goodyera repens*, seen in pine woodland in Tentsmuir Forest along with other exciting species reported in the Autumn 2025 WFS magazine. Next day in a typical mountain setting on Corrie Fee it was Yellow Saxifrage *Saxifraga aizoides* and Mossy Saxifrage *S. hypnoides* that particularly impressed her. On

her own at the other end of the UK in Cornwall, Claire found Thyme Broomrape *Orobanche alba* on a clifftop near Kynance Cove where it parasitises Wild Thyme *Thymus drucei*. Its specific name *alba* seems at odds with its strong red colouring but when seen on the continent it is usually paler and parasitises a range of other mint relatives. Wild Madder, *Rubia peregrina* is also widespread on the Lizard but Claire's record for it was made on a KBRG meeting in Kent where it is a scarce plant with an outlying population on the moist cliffs around Dover and Folkestone. Closer to home Claire recorded garden escapes Meadow-foam *Limnanthes douglasii* and Coralbells *Heuchera sanguinea* and I am hoping that may encourage her to take on a local one-kilometre square study in 2026.

1km SQUARE STUDY

Name	Monad	Location	New	Total
José Gibbs	TR3370	Westbrook, Margate	8	116

In her coastal monad, TR3370 (Westbrook) José noted in 2025 the spread of both Three-cornered Garlic *Allium triquetrum* and Neapolitan Garlic *A. neapolitanum*, both new additions for the square. Although known from several gardens in the vicinity José noted that they had established away from cultivation which may be explained, at least in the case of the much commoner Three-cornered Garlic whose seeds are dispersed by ants, enabling it to colonise new areas especially in mild districts.

Narrow-leaved Pepperwort *Lepidium*

ruderales is not a common plant in Kent so José's discovery of it in the gutter of the coastal esplanade is a welcome new Kent hectad record as well as being new for her monad. Growing with it were Wild Pansy *Viola arvensis*, Restharrow *Ononis repens* and Purple Toadflax *Linaria purpurea*, a nice combination that José hopes won't be cleared away by fastidious householders. Duke of Argyll's Teaplat *Lyceum barbarum* is always interesting to find and José spotted it in a railway line hedge where it may have been bird sown.

SUE BUCKINGHAM

SOUTH COAST and CHANNEL ISLANDS

Cumulative	New	Total
Richard Coomber	15	1,357
Helen Dignum	119	1,566
Maureen Fidkin	124	896
Pippa Hyde	9	1,709
Sarah MacClennan	76	1,086
Ruth Ridley	133	429
Sue and Andy Skarstein	168	889
Peter Whitcomb	3	1,047

Richard's plant-finding was restricted to the early part of the year. He was helped by Maureen telling him where to find new species locally and he added 15 to his cumulative total. Plants that Richard saw close to his home on the Hampshire coast included Red Lungwort *Pulmonaria rubra* in March and Crimson Clover *Trifolium incarnatum* ssp. *incarnatum* in May. Near Mottisfont, on a trip in April, he spotted several new plants, including Thin-spiked Wood-sedge *Carex strigosa*, Wild Pear *Pyrus pyraster* and Gold-of-pleasure *Camelina sativa*. In July, Richard added the last plant of the year, a lovely Moth Mullein *Verbascum blattaria* at Testwood Lakes Nature Reserve.

Helen added 119 new taxa to her cumulative total this year. Most of these were seen on the many WFS meetings that she attended across the country. At the WFS meeting in the Brecks in March, Helen recorded

many local specialities, including Breckland Speedwell *Veronica praecox* and Breckland Thyme *Thymus serpyllum*. On the WFS trip to Jersey, she recorded 38 new taxa in this botanically-rich location. Amongst the rare Channel Island specialities that she saw were Dwarf Pansy *Viola kitaibeliana* and Jersey Forget-me-not *Myosotis sicula*. Moving on to Sark, she saw another Channel Islands endemic, the Rock Sea-lavender subspecies *Limonium binervosum* ssp. *sarniense* (Sell and Murrell's Sark Sea-lavender *L. serquense*).

A WFS trip to the New Forest in June provided a foray into a different habitat, with plenty of new bog and heathland plants, including Slender Marsh-bedstraw *Galium constrictum* and the hybrid between Round-leaved and Great Sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* x *D. anglica* = *D. x obovate*. In July, Helen added several urban plants to her list at the WFS

meeting in Eastbourne. Amongst these were Bermuda-grass *Cynodon dactylon* and Kangaroo-apple *Solanum laciniatum*. Her final WFS meeting of the year was to the AGM and Members' Weekend in Somerset. New plants here included Hairy Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus subbiflorus*. There were also many nice plants that Helen found locally in West Sussex. She noticed Various-leaved Fescue *Festuca heterophylla* on a woodland edge in May, Treacle-mustard *Erysimum cheiranthoides* on arable land in July and Red Goosefoot *Oxybasis rubra* on gravel near the coast in August. In addition, in June,



Burnt Orchid

Helen made a special journey to East Sussex to see the lovely Burnt Orchid *Neotinea ustulata* on Cradle Hill.

Maureen continued to record everything in her second year of

completing the Diary. Of these, 124 were new, making a cumulative total of 896 for the two years. She found most of her plants locally in Hampshire. In the New Forest, she saw several rarities, including Bastard Balm *Melittis melissophyllum* and Pale Dog-violet *Viola lactea*. Also in the New Forest, Maureen found both Musk *Erythranthe moschata* and the more common Monkeyflower *E. guttata*. On Martin Down, on the Hampshire/Wiltshire border, Maureen found two beautiful, scarce species: Pasqueflower *Pulsatilla vulgaris* in April and Burnt Orchid *Neotinea ustulata* in May. Also in May, with the Hampshire Flora Group, she saw Spring Cinquefoil *Potentilla verna* on spoil heaps near Micheldever, while on Hayling Island she saw the attractive grass Hare's-tail *Lagurus ovatus*. On a trip to Boscombe in Dorset during May (with Richard Coomber), she saw Little-Robin *Geranium purpureum* and Small-flowered Catchfly *Silene gallica* amongst other nice plants. Maureen also saw many urban species in her local area on the Hampshire coast. These included White Ramping-fumitory *Fumaria capreolata* and Fern-leaved Corydalis *Corydalis cheilanthifolia*, the latter appearing on a gravelled area near her home. On the Isle of Wight in June, Maureen added many downland species to her list, including Clustered Bellflower *Campanula glomerata* and Oxtongue Broomrape *Orobanche picridis*. Whilst visiting Cambridgeshire in September, Common Amaranth *Amaranthus retroflexus* and Horseradish *Armoracia rusticana* were amongst more new plants spotted.

Pippa added nine new plants to her

long cumulative list. In Epsom, she spotted Moss Phlox *Phlox subulata* on waste ground. All her other new plants were seen at Silk Mills park and ride and Longrun Meadow, Taunton, on the first day of the WFS Members' Weekend. These included the rare native Wall Bedstraw *Galium parisiense* and an introduced species, Striped Goosefoot *Chenopodium strictum*, which has only recently been found in that county. She also noted the hybrids on the site, including Goat x Grey Willow *Salix caprea* x *cinerea* = *S. x reichardtii*.

Sarah added 76 new species to her diary this year making a total of 1,086. On a visit to nearby Hayling Island in May, she recorded Suffocated Clover *Trifolium suffocatum* amongst other scarce coastal plants. Also in May, on a trip to Devon and Somerset, Sarah found several new plants, including Heath Dog-violet *Viola canina* on Blackdown Common and White Horehound *Marrubium vulgare* on chalk grassland by the sea. At a meeting with Hampshire Botanists at Shortheath Common in June, she enjoyed seeing Cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos* and the very rare Dwarf Arrowhead *Sagittaria subulata*. Also in June, Sarah did well to spot Bird's-nest Orchid *Neottia nidus-avis* in Beech woods on the downs in West Sussex. Many of her plants were found close to home on the coast near the Hampshire/Sussex border, including Dittander *Lepidium latifolium* at Fishbourne in July. On a trip to the Yorkshire Dales in August, the highlight was the beautiful Bird's-eye Primrose *Primula farinosa* on the

moors. In September, on Chobham Common with the WFS, Sarah recorded several nice native plants, including Saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria* and the rare Marsh Gentian *Gentiana pneumonanthe*. She also noted the Purple Pitcherplant *Sarracenia purpurea* which has been long established in a bog there.

Ruth was in her third year of recording for the Diary. She saw 133 new species, making a cumulative total of 429. She spotted many of her new plants in pavements and on verges around her home town of Seaford, including Large-flowered Pink-sorrel *Oxalis debilis* in April and Salsify *Tragopogon porrifolius* in May. In Friston Forest, on the South Downs, also in May, Ruth found White Helleborine *Cephalanthera damasonium* and nearby noted the interesting hybrid Twiggy Spurge *Euphorbia x pseudovirgata*. Further west on the Downs, on Wolstonbury Hill, Ruth recorded Greater Butterfly-orchid *Platanthera chlorantha* and other new species, including Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*.

In June, Ruth visited the Yorkshire Dales and enjoyed seeing the hay meadows in full flower and a tiny nature reserve containing Globeflower *Trollius europaeus* in bloom. She also recorded other northern species, including Northern Marsh-orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella* and Wood Crane's-bill *Geranium sylvaticum*. On a holiday to Dorset in August, Ruth noted many heathland and coastal species, including Marsh St. John's-wort *Hypericum elodes* and Rock Samphire *Crithmum maritimum*. In Hampshire, she

identified Bifid Hemp-nettle *Galeopsis bifida*. Also in August, with Seaford Head Natural History Society, Ruth added Moon Carrot *Seseli libanotis* to her list as she was helping them carry out a count of this rare species. In October, on a late visit to the New Forest, Ruth had another two good finds: Lesser Skullcap *Scutellaria minor* and Bog-myrtle *Myrica gale*.

Andy and Sue added 168 new plants this year, making a cumulative total of 889. Many of their new plants were found locally in South Hampshire. In March, they saw Butterbur *Petasites hybridus* on a navigation channel and then Giant Butterbur *P. japonicus* around a village pond. In May, they noted Pale Yellow-eyed-grass *Sisyrinchium striatum* on waste ground and then spotted Weasel's-snout *Misopates orontium* on allotments in June. Also in June, in the New Forest, they found Carnation Sedge *Carex panicea* and, of special note, the rare Bastard Balm *Melittis melissophyllum* (found a few days earlier by Maureen). On a visit to Shropshire in August, they saw a self-seeded Delta Maidenhair-fern *Adiantum raddianum* surviving on an old brick wall and Common Blue-sowthistle *Cicerbita macrophylla* on a grass verge. On the same trip, they visited Doxey Marshes, in the neighbouring county of Staffordshire, where there had been a recent WFS field meeting,

and were delighted to find Buttonweed *Cotula coronopifolia*, Nodding Bur-marigold *Bidens cernua* and then, after some painful searching, the 'Stingless Nettle'. *Urtica dioica* ssp. *galeopsifolia*. In the nearby Montgomery Canal, they found several new aquatic plants, including Frogbit *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* in flower and Water Dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*. Andy and Sue noted many new plants at the WFS Members' Weekend in September, then explored the area afterwards and were delighted to find Slender Hare's-ear *Bupleurum tenuissimum*.

Peter noted the scarcer plants he saw throughout the year, of which three were new to him, putting his cumulative total up to 1,047. He found Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* on a trip to North Yorkshire, where it is more abundant than it is in the south. Back in Sussex, Peter noticed Tall Tutsan *Hypericum x inodorum* on a roadside verge, where it had escaped from cultivation, and near Brighton he spotted Japanese Anemone *Anemone x hybrida* on a verge.

SUE DENNESS

YORKSHIRE including 1km SQUARE STUDY

Cumulative	New	Total
Robin Blades	18	1,329
Anthony & Rita Grainger	45	1,880
Michael Harford	76	650
Kerry Morrison	12	737
Mary Sorsby	19	1,020

Robin has been able to find plants new to him which he would never have been able to see when he lived in London. One of these was Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem *Gagea lutea*, growing at two different sites on the River Ure at Ripon and Benningborough Hall. He was pleased to find Rare Spring-sedge *Carex ericetorum* by himself in a lime quarry at Burton Leonard. When he visited Malham at the end of May, the weather was unusually wet considering the hot, dry summer that

we experienced. He found Jacob's-ladder *Polemonium caeruleum* below Malham Cove, but it was too wet to get decent photographs; he'll have to go back. The Ripon Canal is only 2.3 miles long and links Ripon with the River Ure, which runs down to York. It proved to be good for aquatic and waterside plants and Robin was pleased to find Perfoliate Pondweed *Potamogeton perfoliatus* in flower there. An interesting year for Robin in his new home - I expect he wonders now how he ever had time to go to work.



Anthony and Rita continue to participate in Bradford Botany Group field trips, which are mainly in Yorkshire. They were pleased to see Round-leaved St. John's-wort *Hypericum nummularium* at its only UK site at Seata Quarry, near Aysgarth, Wensleydale, and then some of the escapes from Harlow Carr Garden which got away before they introduced biosecurity for all plants. This was the first RHS garden to receive Plant Healthy biosecurity certification, in 2023. The plants which impressed them most were Greater Cuckooflower *Cardamine raphanifolia* and Aconite-leaved

Buttercup *Ranunculus aconitifolius*. The Bradford group often have a longer field meeting and last year they went to the Gower Peninsula, where they were pleased to see the rare Fen Orchid *Liparis loeselii* and Arctic Eyebright *Euphrasia arctica*. WFS meetings included Lindisfarne, where they saw Lindisfarne Helleborine *Epipactis sancta* in fine bloom and both Eelgrass *Zostera marina* and Dwarf Eelgrass *Z. noltei*. At the AGM and Members' Weekend in Taunton, the hybrid Goat's-beard x Salsify *Tragopogon pratensis* x *T. porrifolius* = *T. x mirabilis* was the highlight of the weekend for them. The Cheltenham and Avon Gorge meetings provided many more new finds, including many of the rare *Sorbus* species. I look forward to seeing them both at this year's meetings, where I am sure they will find many more new plants.

Michael has joined the Harrogate and District Naturalists Society (HDNS) this year and went on some of their field trips. He went with them to Askam Bog, near York, where he was pleased to find many sedges, including the rare Elongated Sedge *Carex elongata*, or Gingerbread Sedge as it is often known, Great Fen-sedge *Cladium mariscus* and Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis*. Water-violet *Hottonia palustris* always makes a lovely show on the ponds and in the ditches there. He also found the escapes from Harlow Carr and again Greater Cuckooflower was a highlight, along with Caucasian Bittercress *Pachyphragma macrophyllum* and Purple Toothwort *Lathraea clandestina*. Another outing with the HDNS to Malham yielded

Fibrous Tussock-sedge *C. appropinquata*, so Michael has had another good year seeing lots more sedges, including some rare ones.

Kerry continued botanising locally and with the HDNS and was pleased to see White Sedge *Carex canescens* and Lesser Tussock-sedge *C. diandra* at Malham on a HDNS field trip. Nearer home, she was also pleased with the same escapes from Harlow Carr, while she found Chia *Salvia hispanica* and Corn Spurrey *Spergula arvensis* near her home in Harrogate. She was pleased to join the WFS meeting in July to Jugger Howe, on Fylingdales Moor in the North Yorkshire Moors. The weather forecast for the day was dismal, with heavy rain forecast, leading to many participants cancelling. However, the rain held off until near the end of the meeting and Kerry was able to see several interesting plants, including Broad-leaved Cottongrass *Eriophorum latifolium*, Slender Eyebright *Euphrasia micrantha*, Cowberry *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* and Creeping Willow *Salix repens*. Unfortunately, in August there was the biggest wildfire in the history of these moors, which destroyed all the moorland habitats which had been carefully monitored and recorded for many years. I've just heard on the news that the fire was started by a camping stove or a fire lit by wild campers on the moors. The whole area is still a black wilderness and it will be years before it recovers and sheep are allowed back into the area.

Mary has been having trouble with her mobility this last year but has still managed to visit many different

places. She was pleased with her finds on a WFS meeting to Doxey Marshes, Staffordshire, which included Purple Milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus* and Floating Bur-reed *Sparganium angustifolium*. She continues to go on walking holidays and was pleased to see the

temperate rain forest on Dartmoor. On a Sorby Natural History Society field trip, she found Barren Brome *Anisantha sterilis* and Wild Leek *Allium ampeloprasum*. I look forward to seeing Mary at WFS field meetings this year.

1km SQUARE STUDY

Name	Branch	Monad	Location	New	Total
Anthony & Rita Grainger	Yorkshire	SE2338	Horsforth, Leeds	4	329

Rita and Anthony's new finds were again in their local urban area. They found Hollyhock *Alcea rosea* growing on a roadside verge, Shaggy-soldier *Galinsoga quadriradiata* in the pavement and Yellow Saxifrage

Saxifraga aizoides as a garden escape. Lastly in November, they found Guernsey Fleabane *Erigeron sumatrensis* growing by a path in the town.

JUDITH COX

NORTH EAST

Name	New	Total
Richard Friend	112	901
Judith Line	?	?
Kevin Storey	14	417

A season surveying in North Wales gave **Richard** the opportunity to hunt down a few rarities, stumble across some new species, look up new sites and re-visit some old favourites. A highlight was the Clwydian Range, new to him, with its abundance of ancient woodlands. An old quarry in one was the site for Limestone Woundwort *Stachys alpina*. Other notables included Perennial Knawel

Scleranthus perennis at Stanner Rocks and finding Pillwort *Pilularia globulifera* for the first time in the wild. Richard reports that Sheathed Sedge *Carex vaginata* on Cross Fell and Elongated Sedge *C. elongata* at Lake Vyrnwy were his top new sedges of 2025 although the recently confirmed rare subspecies of Prickly Sedge *C. muricata* ssp. *muricata* at Moelydd Uchaf might have taken the

prize had the plants not had their flower-heads grazed off! Similarly, no flowers on Spotted Rock-rose *Tuberaria guttata* at South Stack (again!) but Richard says that the ice cream at the RSPB visitor centre was the best of the season.

Although not such a good botanical year for **Judith** in general, there were some encouraging arrivals in the local churchyard, where the total number of species is rising year on year. Brooklime *Veronica beccabunga* and Enchanter's-nightshade *Circaea lutetiana* delighted her because they were spontaneous 'returns' to the churchyard. At the time of writing, she noted that snowdrops *Galanthus* spp. and sowbread species *Cyclamen* spp. were cheering everyone by their wonderful display. Meanwhile, a local group is working with the 'Living Woods' restoration project on an old



Yellow Pimpernel

pit heap site, again looking to increase the species diversity of the area. Judith said that she had found it a delight to wander in company with other enthusiasts through Cockshot Wood, thought to be an ancient woodland. Of particular interest to her were Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina*, Yellow Pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum*, Wood Forget-me-not *Myosotis sylvatica*, Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Bird Cherry *Prunus padus*, Wood Stitchwort *Stellaria nemorum*, Wood Speedwell *Veronica montana*, Hard-fern *Blechnum spicant* and Spring-sedge *Carex caryophyllea*. Yellow Anemone *Anemone ranunculoides*, Small Balsam *Impatiens parviflora*, Rock Sea-spurrey *Spergularia rupicola* and Marsh Cudweed *Gnaphalium uliginosum* were all new records for Judith.

Looking back at his diary, **Kevin** was struck by the number of common plants that he had seen last year which he knew very well and regularly trampled: Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Common Chickweed *Stellaria media*, Common Valerian *Valeriana officinalis*, even Field Pansy *Viola arvensis* and Honesty *Lunaria annua*. Although he notched up only a small number of new species, he did finally add some of the outstanding plants on Cronkley Fell, while noticing Jersey Cudweed *Laphangium luteoalbum* in a gutter in Greenwich had been rather satisfying.

LIZZIE MADDISON

NORTH WEST including 1km SQUARE STUDY

Annual		
Thomas Giles	182	182
Cumulative		
Barbara Allen	31	1,439
Emma Graney	23	283
David Morgan	11	1,033
Paul Nightingale	204	894
Dinesh Patel	131	509
Susan Riley	15	1,231
Dorothy Ross	3	988
Rowena Tilden-Smith	390	728

Thomas joined us last year and was able to come to our meeting at Maghull. He lives in Wallasey, Merseyside, and a good number of his finds are from this area, including Rock Samphire *Crithmum maritimum* on an old gun site and Isle of Man Cabbage *Coincya monensis* ssp. *monensis*. During our meeting, Thomas recorded Lesser Bulrush *Typha angustifolia* and Arrowhead *Sagittaria sagittifolia*. At Llanddulas, on the North Wales coast, he found Yellow Horned-poppy *Glaucium flavum* and Viper's-bugloss *Echium vulgare*.



Barbara hunted mostly in VC59 Merseyside and certainly found some goodies, including Green Nightshade *Solanum nitidibaccatum* at the side of a fallow field near home. She joined four of our meetings, seeing Tufted Loosestrife *Lysimachia thyrsiflora* on the canal at Sollom and Western Sea-lavender *Limonium britannicum* ssp.

celticum at Knott End-on-Sea. Our Autumn Hunt at Ainsdale provided her with Lavender-cotton *Santolina chamaecyparissus*, as well as Black Nightshade *Solanum nigrum*.

St. Helens, Merseyside, is renowned for its glass-making, although sadly now on a smaller scale, and it was at

The World of Glass that **Emma** spotted Crab Apple *Malus sylvestris*. A visit to Risley Moss nature reserve gave her Marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*. Further south, on the Solent Way footpath in Hampshire, she found Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and the annual, Stinking Chamomile *Anthemis cotula*, while at Fort Nelson, Plymouth, she found Dwarf Thistle *Cirsium acaule*, only really seen in the south.

David attended many of the Cheshire Flora meetings (associated with BSBI) and at Red Rocks saw Southern Horsetail *Equisetum x meridionale*, the hybrid between Branched *E. ramosissimum* and Variegated Horsetail *E. variegatum*. Thorn-apple *Datura stramonium* was a nice find, along with two good roses: Sherard's Downy-rose *Rosa sherardii* and Glandular Dog-rose *Rosa squarrosa*.

Paul compiled an extensive list last year. During 2025, he attended two meetings in Scotland, which gave him some beauties, including Purple Milk-vetch *Astragalus danicus* at Kincaig, the rare subspecies of Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum* ssp. *scoticum* at Little Kilrannoch summit and Cyphel *Cherleria sedoides* and Bird's-nest Orchid *Neottia nidus-avis* at Craigellachie, while in Glen Fruin he found Scottish Bramble *Rubus scoticus*. You can't go to Scotland without seeing sedges and again at Little Kilrannoch, Paul saw Stiff Sedge *Carex bigelowii* and its cross with Water Sedge *C. aquatilis*, *C. x limula*. I could go on! On a trackside in Skelton, Cumbria, Paul found

Mawson's Lungwort *Pulmonaria* 'Mawson's Blue', which, I believe, was a first for the county. Paul joined us at our meeting at Gait Barrows NNR, where we saw three 'stars': Dark-red Helleborine *Epipactis atrorubens*, Angular Solomon's-seal *Polygonatum odoratum* and Rigid Buckler-fern *Dryopteris submontana*. Further west, on Walney Island, he found Sea Bindweed *Calystegia soldanella*.

Dinesh is another member who travelled far and wide in the British Isles. Visits to Scotland gave him Scottish Primrose *Primula scotica* near Dounreay and he was delighted to see Oysterplant *Mertensia maritima* at Sunnyside beach, Cullen. I believe that sadly this plant has now gone from North Wales. On the rocky shoreline at Hightown, Merseyside, the cross between Common and English Scurvygrass *Cochlearia officinalis x anglica* = *C. x hollandica* was an excellent find and across the water at Lytham, he spotted Crown Vetch *Securigera varia*. Visiting Anglesey, he recorded Bog Bean *Menyanthes trifoliata* and on a trackside at Gop Hill in Flintshire, Common Calamint *Clinopodium ascendens*. I understand that Gop Hill is a neolithic mound. In the woods at Folly Farm, Somerset, he came across Woodruff *Galium odoratum*, while back home, growing on a Preston allotment, was Many-seeded Goosefoot *Lipandra polysperma*. You can imagine that once you have this in your garden, it would be difficult to be rid of it.

Holidaying in Cornwall, **Sue** could not resist a spot of plant-hunting and was

successful in finding Rock Samphire *Crithmum maritimum* and Spiny Bear's-breech *Acanthus spinosus* at Polperro. An unusual find by the side of the road in Looe was Cabbage *Brassica oleracea*. Another unusual find in a rape field at Holme, Cumbria, was Velvetleaf *Abutilon theophrasti*, while she found Austrian Chamomile *Cota austriaca* on a roadside near home in Warton.

Dorothy tells me that she is having problems with arthritis, which makes things difficult for her. She managed to find three new plants during 2025: Sea Buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* at Fairhaven, which pleased her as it was in flower; Garden Privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium* in a local hedge; and while on holiday in Congham, West Norfolk, she was pleased to be able to identify Dwarf Spurge *Euphorbia exigua*.

Rowena certainly covered some ground during 2025 and benefited from attending several meetings. I will start in the Highlands of Scotland, where she saw Trailing Azalea *Kalmia procumbens* and Cloudberry *Rubus chamaemorus*. On to our meeting at Gait Barrows, she saw Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and Common Gromwell *Lithospermum officinale*. The latter is easier to identify in autumn due to the nutlets turning white and shiny. On the outskirts of Stockport, she spotted Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria* on Alan Newton Way. Alan Newton was the Vice-County Recorder for Cheshire until Graeme Kay took over during the 1970s. In our wonderful Southport sand dunes,



she saw Wild Celery *Apium graveolens*, a member of the Apiaceae (Umbelliferae) family, and Field Wormwood *Artemisia campestris* ssp. *maritima*. Myttons Meadow SSSI, near Slaidburn, Forest of Bowland, sounds interesting; here she saw Giant Bellflower *Campanula latifolia* and Harebell *C. rotundifolia*. In Oxford, Rowena found Snowdrops *Galanthus nivalis* and in Buckinghamshire, at Aston Clinton, she saw Pyramidal Orchids *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and Greater Butterfly-orchids *Platanthera chlorantha*. Finally, in Dorset, she saw Round-leaved Fluellen *Kickxia spuria* and Common Broomrape *Orobanche minor*.

It was interesting reading about your finds, and I know that you will be hoping for more discoveries in 2026. Be careful on the roads.

NORTH WEST 1km SQUARE STUDY

Name	Monad	Location	Year	New	Total
Barbara Allen	SJ5391	Clock Face, Merseyside	6	8	301
	SJ5692		2	0	185
	SJ5693		2	0	95
	SJ5792	Merseyside	2	0	101
	SJ5793		2	0	88
	SJ5088	Pex Hill, Nr. Widness	1	209	209
Pauline Grimshaw	SJ9620	Werneth Low, Tameside	3	3	151
Peter Jepson	SD6722	Darwen	3	6	350
Susan Riley	SD5072	Warton, Carnforth	1	157	157
Sheila Wynn	SD7444	West Bradford, Lancs	6	0	259

Crawford Street, Clock Face, was a productive area for **Barbara**, who found Chiloé Avens *Geum quellyon*, Bilbao's Fleabane *Erigeron floribundus* and, in several places, Garden Cress *Lepidium sativum*. She saw another fleabane, Guernsey Fleabane *E. sumatrensis* in Hall Street and Marsh Yellow-cress *Rorippa palustris* by Miner's Walk. Pex Hill gave Barbara some really good plants, too many to mention. In the disused quarry which was used for target practice by the Home Guard in WW2 and now for rock climbing, Barbara recorded Early Hair-grass *Aira praecox* and Royal Fern *Osmunda regalis*. In the hedgerow on the lane leading up to the Observatory were Sieber's Crocus *Crocus sieberi* and Snowdrops *Galanthus nivalis*, plus two geraniums: Small-flowered Crane's-bill *Geranium pusillum* and Knotted Crane's-bill *G. nodosum*. Roadside

plants that she found were Goat's-beard *Tragopogon pratensis* and



Goat's-beard

Narrow-leaved Ragwort *Senecio inaequidens*.

Pauline has been helping to monitor Werneth Low's population of Skylarks. It wasn't an easy project because disturbing them was a problem and once fledged, they only stay on the ground for a few days. Making use of her time in the area she recorded 21 new plants. The woodlands gave her Yellow Pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum* and Wood Meadow-grass *Poa nemoralis*, whilst in the meadow she found Eyebrights *Euphrasia* agg. Balm *Melissa officinalis* and Rose Campion *Silene coronaria* were seen as garden escapes.

I have added **Peter's** finds for 2024 here, as I inadvertently missed out Greater Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus angustifolius* and Autumn Crocus *Crocus nudiflorus* in my report last year. He found these in Sunnyhurst Meadows. Apologies Peter. His 2025 finds include the hybrid between Water and Wood Avens *Geum rivale* x *G. urbanum* = *G. x intermedium* in Sunnyhurst Wood and Nettle-leaved Bellflower *Campanula trachelium*, which was a nice find on a track of limestone chippings leading to Sunnyhurst treatment works. Peter has not spent much time plant-hunting of late as, over the last five years, he has been engaged in propagating and planting over 7,500 scarce moorland plants in Natural England's pilot re-establishment project on Darwen Moors. He reports a high level of success to date - well done Peter.

This is the first time that **Susan** has sent me a 1km list. She decided to

start from her home in Warton, near Morecambe Bay, in Lancashire, close to the boundary with Cumbria. It is also close to the famous Carnforth railway station. Ancestors of the first president of the United States, George Washington, came to live here around 1300. Some of the



lovely plants around the area that Sue found were Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina*, Goldilocks Buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus*, Yellow Oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, Hairy Tare *Ervilia hirsuta* and Austrian Chamomile *Cota austriaca*. Sue tells me that she was late starting her square so she will have many more exciting finds during 2026.

I hope that you enjoy recording locally and look forward to receiving news of your finds during 2026.

JULIE CLARKE

THAMES and CHILTERNs including 1km SQUARE STUDY

Annual	New	Total
Angus Bentall		373
Mary Bentall		365
Philip Youd		253
Cumulative		
Susan Grimshaw	3	1,206
Roger Heath-Brown	50	2,043
Barbara Spence	49	1,202

Angus and Mary did much of their botanising together, though not all of it. They have interesting lists, showing increasing confidence with ferns and grasses. Their records come mainly from their home patch in



the Cotswolds and include local specialities such as Meadow Clary *Salvia pratensis*, Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* and Downy Woundwort *Stachys germanica*. I'm sorry to say that they also record New Zealand Pigmyweed *Crassula helmsii*, and Parrot's-feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum* – two of our worst invasive aquatic alien species. On a happier note, they also recorded Tubular Water-dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa* from a local wet meadow - always a nice plant to find.

This is **Philip's** second year of recording. He has clearly now outgrown the Beginners' Diary, having seen a very high proportion of the plants mentioned there, and a good many more besides. His list includes over 100 species new to him this year, even though his recording is almost all from around his home patch of Chesham and Amersham. He benefited from the WFS Maulden Wood meeting and also visited the reserves at Aston Clinton Ragpits

and Warren Bank. He was pleased to see both Scarlet Pimpernel *Lysimachia arvensis* and Yellow Pimpernel *L. nemorum*.

Susan had a wonderful holiday in the Yorkshire Dales but since she had made several previous visits, she found only one species new to her - the delightful Spring Sandwort *Sabulina verna*. Another success was seeing a Wild Service-tree *Sorbus torminalis* covered in blossom, a tree she had known for several years without ever finding it in flower. Otherwise, she enjoys monitoring her home patch, as I'm sure we all do.

I, **Roger**, come next in alphabetical order and have a great many records from a holiday on the Isles of Scilly. The vast majority of these were introduced species of course, but I was delighted to see the charming Dwarf Pansy *Viola kitaibeliana* as well as Orange Bird's-foot *Ornithopus pinnatus*. At the other end of the country, I visited the Outer Hebrides, where the pick of the plants for me was Thread Rush *Juncus filiformis*. Returning home via Skye I climbed up past the Old Man of Storr to see Iceland-purslane *Koenigia islandica*, exactly where I had been told to look for it! This completes my 50th year in the WFS and, with 50 additions to my list, I shall celebrate by moving on to Parnassus.

Last, but not least is **Barbara**, who has an impressive list, including 20 new species from a holiday in Cornwall and another six from a stay in the Lake District. Because she had

searched unsuccessfully for them before, her favourites in Cornwall were Heath Pearlwort *Sagina subulata* and Sea Mouse-ear *Cerastium diffusum*. In the Lake District, she was particularly pleased with Beech Fern *Phegopteris connectilis* and Oak Fern *Gymnocarpium dryopteris*. Closer to home, she went to see Red Helleborine *Cephalanthera rubra* at its Chiltern site.



I received New Year messages from a number of members. It is always good to hear from you, whether with identification queries or other news. Do keep in touch everyone, and here's hoping for some fine flowers in the coming year.

THAMES and CHILTERNs 1km SQUARE STUDY

There was only one 1km square study again this year - my own! For a fourth year, I continued work on SP5801, which includes my home in the village of Garsington. There are quiet roads and footpaths, a churchyard and old stone buildings, a pond and stream, and some rather dull arable and grazing land. I was only able to make six additions to the list, bringing the total to 255. The most notable new plants were Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, which appeared

spontaneously in a neighbour's "no-mow-May" patch, and Crimson Clover *Trifolium incarnatum* ssp. *incarnatum*, which turned up on an arable field edge. The latter seems increasingly common as a component in arable game-cover strips, which is where my plants probably originated. There are still some notable gaps in my list, so there's more work to be done!

ROGER HEATH-BROWN

SEVERN VALLEY, MID and SOUTH WALES

It has struck me while writing this report that I'm incredibly lucky to be in touch with such a variety of botanists, from those who like to keep in touch with wild flowers because they enjoy being among them for aesthetic reasons, to keep regular dog walks interesting, or as art inspirations, to those who work professionally or voluntarily in plant conservation or research. I hope my very brief notes on each member that I've heard from will give some idea of this range of context as I feel so privileged to be told some of their very varied thoughts and wishes. As most of you know, I have had various computer problems which have messed up some of my saved correspondence. Please forgive me if I have left anyone out who should be included.

Ruth Dawes spent her best botany

times of the year when she and a friend undertook some intensive recording for the BSBI in an 'isolated upland square in Montgomeryshire', in an area which 'rejoices in the wonderful name of Cwmnantymeichiaid'...Pronounce that correctly if you can! Quite apart from this charming element, it sounds as if the plants were most rewarding as she mentions small treasures such as Moonwort *Botrychium lunaria*, Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and the tiny Club-rush *Isolepis* species, while among larger growths the elusive (and uncommon in VC47) Fragrant Agrimony *Agrimonia procera* was found. Birdsong and a fascinating range of micro-habitats added to their delight in the 'work'.

Ruth Harding works for Natural Resources Wales, so she always

visits good habitats to assess their importance or monitor their condition. This year she was able to see such rare and/or threatened plants as Lesser Water-plantain *Baldellia ranunculoides*, Fen Orchid *Liparis loeselii* and Wood Bitter-vetch *Vicia orobus*. Less-easily-spotted species included the coastal specialist Dotted Sedge *Carex punctata* and Few-flowered Spike-rush *Eleocharis quinqueflora*, which also often favours dune slacks. However, Ruth, like so many of us now, also pays attention to ruderal and urban habitats, and her diary included one of the most exotic entries I've ever had - Indian Bean *Catalpa bignonioides*! Stace 4 says that 'seedlings are sometimes found in warm places', so I suppose a South Wales car park is eminently suitable. The diary total for this year was 191. **Wendy Hofmaier** tells me that she is never going to become a rarity chaser, but that her membership gives her great pleasure as she enjoys the magazine and two years with the Beginner's Diary have helped her to learn and appreciate the local Quantock species which she sees on her dog walks. We share a love of Colt's-foot *Tussilago farfara* and exchange photos when it comes into flower, and both her photos and flower watercolours appear delightfully on the calendars she produces for friends

William Howard concentrated on a 1km square study that he has undertaken. The monad includes his home village of Oakridge Lynch, near Stroud, and contains parts of two local nature reserves, so is a rewarding botanical area. This

exercise added nearly 40 to his cumulative list, which now stands at 377. Most of these were useful fill-ins of common plants, and as I'm a huge fan of 'weeds', I was delighted to see what he calls 'an embarrassing number' of these from his own garden! A distinguished addition was Pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus*, which can be very difficult to locate and is a character plant of proper, unimproved grassland. He also added the splendid Woolly Thistle *Cirsium eriophorum* from nearby Daneway Banks, while a duty visit to the Adder's-tongue Spearwort *Ranunculus ophioglossifolius* reserve at Badgeworth contributed delightful Grass Vetchling *Lathyrus nissolia* as well as what I find a remarkably good photo of the sad little buttercup. William apologises for this as 'the best I can do' but considering what a weedy little plant it is, and one is not allowed to get too close on the one open-day a year, it's the best image I've ever seen!

Graham Lavender had a frustrating year of restricted botany as disagreeable troubles with builders and health ate up time and the long drought had a very negative effect on Exmoor. However, he managed a thrilling achievement in the autumn, which covers areas of both wild and garden botany. A man called Norman Hadden (1888-1971) lived most of his life near Graham's home in West Porlock, botanised locally, and created a really marvellous garden with plants sourced from around the world. Part of this was in rented woodland, unmanaged now for more than 50 years. Graham searched here for several years, finding

surviving mature plants and some properly naturalised by seed or suckering. His searches were written up as a most excellent book; *Norman Hadden - The West Porlock Garden of a Botanist and Plantsman* came out in autumn 2025. This offers great interest to wild flower lovers as well as gardeners and is available from the author:

grahamlavender@hotmail.com. Graham never neglects local square-bashing either and a decade of daily dog walks looking at hedges, stone walls, road verges, allotments and small streams has brought his home monad total to 609 – we should all be inspired by this!

Steven Law lives near Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire and works in most interesting areas of ecology and conservation, such as the restoration of traditional orchards and hedgerows, and the management of 'meadow' land, which is such a threatened habitat due to the 20th century decline of pastoralism. He mentions the 'careful timing of cuts or grazing', the removal of 'arisings' to avoid enriching the land, and the working out of a balance between active management and avoiding disturbance. His special interest is trees, both natives and aliens introduced as landscape features. This all gives him the chance to see plenty of wild flowers (his 2025 list totalled 149), including inconspicuous favourites like Small-flowered Buttercup *Ranunculus parviflorus*. A visit to the Fort William area of Scotland added some nice plants, including Northern Buckler-fern *Dryopteris expansa*.

Simon Leach has a special place in Somerset botany, being co-recorder for VC5 (South Somerset) with Steve Parker. Steve has long been a Levels expert (and will shortly produce a comprehensive book on this amazing area), and Simon I see every week as we are both members of a small team curating the Somerset Herbarium (TTN) in Taunton. He is also actively involved in national undertakings such as the recent production of *A new vascular plant Red List for Great Britain*, which is revising our knowledge to show ever more frightening declines, even if one of them is causing some



amusement - Charlock *Sinapis arvensis* now has a threat category! In southern Britain, this does seem

absurd, but apparently the extreme decline of arable cultivation in the far north and west has lost it a vast amount of habitat, causing it to slip away unnoticed. Simon is now also one of the country's top dandelion experts, which is giving TTN notable importance to any student of this remarkable group. I know the WFS diary still has just '*Taraxacum* agg.', but figures (which are probably already out of date) give more than 1,200 individual species in Europe, 250 in Britain and Ireland, and 180 in Somerset! Two Somerset species are even 'new to science'. Pressing dandelions is an art as much as a straightforward skill (imagine getting every tooth of one of these leaves perfectly arranged!), but between Simon, Graham Lavender and another local botanist, Jeanne Webb, the herbarium has 811 mounted sheets, with 173 of the Somerset residents represented and 182 of the national totals.

By chance, a new member, **Elisabeth (Libby) Harris**, who has just joined from Builth Wells, tells me that she is starting a project in 2026 to identify the habitat requirements of all her local dandelions, as well as working out what the county-wide Powys list is, so I can see some very lively correspondence between taraxacologists!

Steve Little, as well as contributing a great deal to the running of the WFS with tasks from leading meetings to proofreading reports (several times saving me from humiliating typos!), is always active in Gloucestershire, notably in his home area of Cheltenham. In 2025 he was very

busy with hawkweeds *Hieracium* spp. as well as leading an Avon Gorge meeting to look at that equally difficult genus *Sorbus* (the whitebeam sections). The Bristol expert, skilled rock climber and poet Libby Houston and WFS member Peter Hilton were also part of the team. The event was then extended by some to other Severn and Wye Valley species, surveying on into Herefordshire. He says 'I think I must be an apomict addict', which must (incredibly to me) have been encouraged by his detailed involvement with Gloucestershire cotoneasters!

Georgina Milway is a Worcestershire member from near Tewkesbury who always makes me realise how feeble my plant-hunting was when I was at boarding school in Malvern! I was already very keen, and we walked on the hills and commons, but every year Georgina's diary shows me something I missed around there! In 2025 she attended WFS meetings on several occasions; that at Tiddesley Wood in May, with the Worcestershire Flora Group, seems to have been especially productive, helping her to add several docks, which can be such an intimidating group. She also visited a number of local nature reserves, adding delightful but near-invisible Grass Vetchling near Evesham. Her own lawn was nicely flowery during 'No Mow May' and later in the summer she found the dramatic Thorn-apple *Datura stramonium* as an arable weed. A visit to Dorset added some coastal and uncommon species, such as White Horehound *Marrubium vulgare*, which brought her total for this diary up to 228.

Mark Pearce is a new Somerset member, which is of course a pleasure for me. I don't yet know about his special interests because although we meet regularly, it's at Hardy Plant Society meetings more than with the WFS! However, I know he is working on the BSBI Identiplant course and enjoyed the WFS AGM in Taunton. We share a 2027 resolution to spend some botanising time together and look at things on both sides of the garden fence.

I'm looking forward being in touch with a new member, **Mariya (Masha) Tarnavska**, who works as an ecologist for Warwickshire County Council. She gained a Level 4 FISC a few years ago and finds that field botany meetings are most enjoyable and helpful for improving identification skills. She intends to concentrate on grasses, sedges and rushes, and I'm glad to hear that she feels the WFS will help with that!

Another new member, **Nicoleta Tudor**, based in Swindon, is also looking forward to field meetings, though her special focus will be on the beauty of plant structure as her particular interest is macro photography. I hope she will enjoy our photo competitions.

Andrew Williams had little time for botanising but sent me a delightful email explaining about time being taken up with unexpectedly long visits from grandchildren followed by a health crisis for their cat Bert, and how this brought them to Langford Veterinary Hospital near Congresbury. This then led them to

Rowberrow, where they fell in with a Mendip Morris Dancers' display! There was some time to explore some good hedgerows, but I quite see that preparing a list of plants did not fit into 2025. I will look forward to the next thrilling chapter.

Aaron Woods has probably sent more records in to this Branch than any other current member! Every winter a substantial list appears, beautifully organised so I can see his additions for the year as well as his full cumulative list, which now stands at a magnificent total of 1,223. He always scours his home area but in 2025 enjoyed seeing plants further afield. He mentions 'a few non-botanical trips to London, Brighton and Marazion (Cornwall)' but as the very first entries on his additions list are Spiny Bear's-breech *Acanthus spinosus* from St. Anne's church, Kew Green, 'spreading in lawn and between graves', and Pheasant's-eye *Adonis annua* from a patch of rough grass in Brunswick Square, Hove, it was clear at once that 'non-botanical' did **not** mean 'not-looking'! The Pheasant's-eye intrigued me because although the urban site sounded as if it might have been from a 'wild flower' sowing, the first time I ever saw it was in Friston Forest, not at all far away in East Sussex. A rather different highlight was seeing the curious German-ivy *Delairea odorata* (syn. *Senecio mikanioides*) actually in flower in Cornwall. It's difficult to catch it right for the flowers as these are usually in winter, when one is not on the Isles of Scilly or at West Penwith. Good memories were revived by time spent in Derbyshire, where, as a teenager, Aaron used to

botanise with his father and Roy Maycock, the marvellous biology teacher from Milton Keynes who inspired so many field botanists. Sites remembered 'fondly' yielded Moonwort *Botrychium linaria*, Bird's-nest Orchid *Neottia nidus-avis* and Nottingham Catchfly *Silene nutans*, 'specially welcome as not seen in many years'. The connections plants keep with past life are immensely precious, so I have included Aaron's own highlights as there are just too many good things in his lists to quote otherwise!

Janet Vernon is another member who always keeps in touch, but in 2025 she too had an 'off' year. Their dog reached old age and was too frail to take walks or indeed be left alone for more than a few hours, so keeping her company was of prime importance. She is buried in Janet and Mal's garden, where, as I write this, the *Pulmonaria* whose leaves she used to nibble will be coming into flower, and this picture makes a touching end to this report of a really difficult year!

RO FITZGERALD

SOUTH WEST

Annual	New	Total
Ed Dolphin		268
Jenny Irwin		185
Joanna Milner		313
Lizzy Holyoak		139
Cumulative		
Chrissy Marshall	24	265
David Holyoak	88	1,118
Kathleen Hughes	11	279
Lesley Philpott		1,026
Sally Maller	157	1,004
Suzanne Jones	3	363

Ed was less active last year but still made over 500 records of 268 species during his survey work. This was mostly around Sidmouth and in other areas of south-east Devon. He dabbled a little in dandelions *Taraxacum* spp. with the help of John

Richards, the BSBI referee for the genus, and while on a visit to Aylesbeare Common, he found Heath Dog-violet *Viola canina*, along with other heathland species. Other notable species seen on his wanderings were Garden Speedwell

Veronica longifolia and White Mustard *Sinapis alba*.

Despite a difficult year, **Jenny** still increased the number of species recorded for her annual diary, greatly helped by a county botany group meeting at Branton Burrows in June, where she saw Marsh Helleborine *Epipactis palustris*, Yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata* and Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*. Many of her other plants were found near where she lives. She also provided me with a modest list of additions to her 1km square. During the year, she sent me an interesting image of a four-petalled Lesser Periwinkle *Vinca minor*, which caused me some head-scratching. I also gave her some advice on useful resources for grass identification.

Joanna found 313 species in 2025, slightly fewer than in 2024, but 71 of them were new compared to previous years' diaries and, of these, 32 were completely new to her. She helpfully provided me with a list of her highlights, which included Thread-leaved Water-crowfoot *Ranunculus trichophyllus* and some species from more challenging groups, such as Boreal Bramble *Rubus nemoralis* and One-flowered Glasswort *Salicornia disarticulata*. She has been paying particular attention to plants growing on the edges of the pavements near her home and passed on a separate list of those, which I very much enjoyed looking through, as such

plants are a particular fascination of mine too.

Lizzie had a busy year, which restricted her time for botanising, so she had a rather reduced total compared to 2024. However, her diary included a good selection of species she had seen for the first time, so she was still able to increase her botanical knowledge. These included some of the more familiar



Three-cornered Garlic

plants, such as Three-cornered Garlic *Allium triquetrum*, Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa* and Reed Canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea*. She was also able to attend some WFS field meetings, which added

several other less common species.

Chrissy sent me a list of 24 new species for her diary. She had a very productive visit to Suffolk as well as some nice records from Scotland, where she saw Tufted Forget-me-not *Myosotis laxa*. Closer to home, she found Hoary Willowherb *Epilobium parviflorum* growing in a local hedgerow, which, despite the other species she saw in 2025, she considered her most special find.

As with Lizzie, **David** was also occupied with non-botanical activities and so added just 88 species to his rather spectacular first year total. He took full advantage of some WFS meetings to add several cotoneaster and whitebeam *Sorbus* species to his list, as well as his own very interesting finds. The latter included the hybrid between Goat's-beard *Tragopogon pratensis* and Salsify *T. porrifolius* = *T. x mirabilis*, Greater Water-parsnip *Sium latifolium* and the increasingly common Hoary Mustard *Hirschfeldia incana*.

Kathleen has not been terribly active in recent years, but she was able to put together a summary of her finds for me covering the last five years and adding 11 to her total. Most fascinating for me was Red-maids *Calandrinia ciliata*, which she saw on St. Mary's, on the Isle of Scilly. Unfortunately, although recorded from a number of sites over the years, this species is not in the fourth edition of Stace. Further correspondence with one of the vice-county recorders in Cornwall indicates that there is now some doubt as to whether this plant is *C.*

ciliata or *C. menziesii*, so it will be interesting to see how this develops.

Lesley did not add to her diary but tells me that she still enjoys reading the magazine. She is presently helping some friends audit the species in a local churchyard, and on a short walk in June, noted over 80 species near where she lives in North Cornwall.

Sally had a great year and took full advantage of WFS and other local botany group meetings. Although she already had quite an impressive cumulative total, she added another 157 species to it in 2025. Her list of additions was wonderful to read though, full of all sorts of interesting plants and locations. Her favourites included Crowberry *Empetrum nigrum*, Bladderseed *Physospermum cornubiense* and Dorset Heath *Erica ciliaris*. She also saw lots of Four-leaved Allseed *Polycarpon tetraphyllum* on a West London pavement, a species that is also extending its range in the South-West.

Suzanne had a busy year, which limited her time for botanising, but she added three species to her total: Marsh-marigold *Caltha palustris*, Greater Celandine *Chelidonium majus* and Winter Heliotrope *Petasites pyrenaicus*, the last of which she had previously forgotten to add to her diary. She undertook the Winter Hunt for the third time and finds it really interesting to see what is in flower each year.

TIM PURCHES

MIDLANDS including 1km SQUARE STUDY

Annual	New	Total
Louis Adlington		261
Cumulative		
Jackie Ellis	19	1,084
David and Sue Emley	10	1,092
Judith Lee	55	882
Nicki Mottram	92	1,010
Mary and Claire Smith	20	1,604
John and Monika Walton	46	1,503

Small Toadflax *Chaenorhinum minus* and Purple Viper's-bugloss *Echium plantagineum* on imported soil were good finds for **Louis** in his second annual list, along with the grass Cockspur *Echinochloa crus-galli*. This should encourage him to continue to nose around on the post-industrial sites and industrial estates that are so attractive to botanists and often much richer in species than the surrounding countryside. His visit to Gresley Wood yielded both Hard Shield-fern *Polystichum aculeatum* and Soft Shield-fern *P. setiferum* for comparison. He also added a couple of the more easily identifiable hybrids: *Crataegus x media*, the hybrid between Hawthorn *C. monogyna* and Midland Hawthorn *C. laevigata*, and *Dactylorhiza x grandis*, the hybrid between Common Spotted-orchid *D. fuchsii* and Southern Marsh-orchid *D. praetermissa*. A trip to Gibraltar

Point, Lincolnshire, saw him, with a little help from his Vice-county Recorder (VCR), add Rock Sea-lavender *Limonium binervosum* to his total. In a few years' time, he may plan trips to other places in Britain to see all of the other *Limonium* microspecies.

I can remember where I was when I saw my first Marsh Sowthistle *Sonchus palustris* and **Jackie** was equally surprised when she encountered it beside the River Alde at Snape, Suffolk. Garden Parsley *Petroselinum crispum* was a good find in the estuary car park near Aldeburgh. A holiday on the Isles of Scilly had her searching for colonising exotics such as Bugle-lily *Watsonia borbonica* and Shrub Goldilocks *Chrysocoma coma-aurea* -on Tresco, as well as chasing up a friend's tip-off for Lesser New Zealand Flax *Phormium cookianum*

on St. Mary's. Although not a new plant for her, Jackie was pleased to have caught the flowering of hundreds of Greater Butterfly-orchids



Greater Butterfly-orchid

Platanthera chlorantha at Caeau Tan-y-Bwlch in North Wales and she added Pale Lady's-Mantle *Alchemilla xanthochlora* to her list at the same time.

David and Sue sent in an annual report full of excellent photographs showing their 2025 botanical adventures, plus a full list going back to 1982. A trip to the dry-cleaners in Barlaston produced a new county record for Staffordshire of Orange Coneflower *Rudbeckia fulgida* growing next to the nearby canal. While hunting White Admiral butterflies at Highgate Common, near Wolverhampton, they found a seedling of Broad-leaved Cockspurthorn *Crataegus persimilis*. While stopping for lunch at Redesmere Lake, Cheshire, they came across a few plants of Hemp *Cannabis sativa*, probably from birdseed, as this is a popular bird-feeding spot. With some help from

the ranger at RSPB Conwy, they also added Brackish Water-crowfoot *Ranunculus baudotii* from one of the pools.

Judith is a regular member of the Derbyshire Flora Group, with which she discovered some interesting species. In August, she found the garden plant Golden Tickseed *Coreopsis tinctoria* growing in an arable field alongside Striped Goosefoot *Chenopodium strictum*, which can always be difficult to identify. In September, in woods near Swanwick, she saw Ostrich Fern *Matteuccia struthiopteris* and, on nearby arable land, Field Woundwort *Stachys arvensis*, always a special find. The Yellow Dodder *Cuscuta campestris* that she found on the drawdown zone of Ladybower Reservoir wins the prize for being in the most unusual habitat. A garden plant that seems to be spreading is Hedge Hebe *Veronica x franciscana*. Judith found this in Portpatrick, Dumfries and Galloway. This is now a common sight in Northern Ireland but there are only scattered coastal records of it from around the rest of the British Isles.

Nicki's remarkable botanical year was fitted around training for a 26-mile trek for the Alzheimer's Society. She had a great year visiting many of Britain's botanical hotspots. Two weeks in the Burren produced Dense-flowered Orchid *Neotinea maculata* amongst other local specialities, plus Spring Gentian *Gentiana verna* and Hoary Rock-rose *Helianthemum oelandicum* within the same metre square. The loughs were very dry, and Nicki is thinking of returning in

2027. A week later she was with Paul Green in County Wexford and, in July, on a BSBI trip with Chris Metherell to Holy Island, picking up Scarce Fiddleneck *Amsinckia lycopoides* on the Farne Islands. Nicki was lucky enough to meet orchid expert Sean Cole at Stockings Meadow, Bromsgrove, who pointed out the hybrid between Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and Heath Spotted-orchid *D. maculata* = *D. x transiens*. A hike from a scout camp in the New Forest conveniently took her past Coral-necklace *Illecebrum verticillatum* and Chamomile *Chamaemelum nobile* at Hatchet Pond. Then off to the Great Orme for Welsh Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster cambricus* and to RSPB Conwy for, guess what, Brackish Water-crowfoot *Ranunculus baudotii*, this time verified by Denbighshire VCR Delyth Williams. Delyth also explained the differences between Common Glasswort *Salicornia europaea* and Long-spiked Glasswort *S. dolichostachya*, which she bravely collected from the mud of the estuary. Judith saw Horned-pondweed *Zannichellia palustris* and Common Stonewort *Chara vulgaris* at a small pond nearby, but she couldn't count the Stonewort as it is not considered a vascular plant by the WFS. In her home county of Warwickshire, she finally found Common Duckweed *Lemna minor* at Spennall Park, Studley, and she was on the Warwickshire Flora Group trip to Pooley Fields Country Park when the first county record of Stinking Fleabane *Diurachia graveolens* was made. In December, she went to Radford Semele, near Leamington Spa, for White Wall-rocket *Diplotaxis*

erucoides, a Mediterranean species found growing in a pavement.

Mary and Claire Smith added the same number of species last year as they did in 2024 and now reckon they will be 101 by the time that they reach Parnassus! Their favourite species in 2025 was Leafy Rush *Juncus foliosus*, which they found at its only Derbyshire site. It was first seen in 2016 by David Dupree; Mary and Claire also found it that year from David's directions but had such problems getting it confirmed that it never made it into their diary. Last year in November, they managed to find just one shoot still with flowers, which made identification certain. With binoculars, they spotted a plant of Chick Pea *Cicer arietinum* on the dam wall of Valehouse Reservoir, Tintwhistle, Claire's magnified photo being sufficient to satisfy the Derbyshire VCR. Being members of the Derbyshire Flora Group, Mary and Claire added the Golden Tickseed *Coreopsis tinctoria*, Ostrich Fern *Matteuccia struthiopteris* and Yellow Dodder *Cuscuta campestris* that Judith Lee also saw. Amongst their new species was the unusual Hirsute Garlic *Allium trifoliatum*, which is similar to the more common Hairy Garlic *A. subhirsutum*, but why such ugly English names for such lovely flowers? This was found with a seedling of Laurustinus *Viburnum tinus* growing as pavement weeds in Clay Cross. We are very envious of their record for Eastern Hawthorn *Crataegus x subsphaerica*, the hybrid between Hawthorn and Large-sepalled Hawthorn *C. rhpidophylla*, and can imagine what was needed for identification. Perhaps we are just

hawthorn blind.

Having just voted in our local election, we, **John and Monika**, spotted some plants of Garden Thyme *Thymus vulgaris* growing by the steps of the polling-station. Another chance find was the Powell's Amaranth *Amaranthus powellii* that was growing at the base of a wall next to a corner shop in Nuneaton, where we had parked to go to a Pilates class. Photos of the leaves and perianths were sent to Quentin Groom and John Poland for confirmation. We sent the location to Nicki Mottram, but by the time that she went to see it, the shop owner had destroyed it. Isn't urban botany wonderful! We spent a week botanising in eastern Scotland and added some nice finds, such as Lesser Butterfly-orchid *Platanthera*

bifolia, Cowbane *Cicuta virosa* and Cloudberry *Rubus chamaemorus*. The WFS Cambridge meeting was an eye-opener. We were shown a fantastic collection of alien plants, the result of years of hard work by Alan Leslie and numerous BSBI referees. I am sure that most of the participants (including us) would have been unable to name any of them if they were presented at a FISC test or had turned up in their own county. Alan obviously has a well-developed skill of noticing when a plant 'looks a bit funny', which comes with experience. Lastly, thanks to Mike Crewe for identifying a 'funny' mullein from a recreation ground near Lea Marston from photos after its features clearly didn't fit with Stace. It turned out to be the hybrid between Great Mullein *Verbascum thapsus* and Orange Mullein *V. phlomoides* = *V. x kernerii*,

MIDLANDS 1km SQUARE STUDY

Name	Monad	Location	Year	New	Total
Judith Lee	SK2657	Bonsall Mines	1	97	97

If you had to select a Derbyshire monad for a 1km square study, you could do no better than the derelict lead mine workings in the limestone grassland of SK2657 that **Judith** surveyed. It must have been a picture, with such delights as Small Scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*, Crosswort *Cruciata laevipes*, Wild Thyme *Thymus drucei* and, hiding under the sward, Spring Sedge *Carex caryophyllea*. The two lead mine specialists Alpine Penny-cress *Noccaea caerulea*, its lumpy flower spikes often being the first thing you see, and Spring Sandwort



Sabulina verna were there too. Judith's monad had few ruderals, a modest species list, with few discoveries on an already well visited monad, but plenty of quality. A brief look at the BSBI database shows that there is plenty more to be found there, including four orchid species, Mountain Pansy *Viola lutea*, while the elusive Moonwort *Botrychium lunaria* was last seen there in 2017, at about

the time that it disappeared from many other sites. Judith is planning to return in 2026, but this time hopes to avoid the rather skittish cows that made botany somewhat difficult first time round.

JOHN AND MONIKA WALTON

GREATER LONDON

Cumulative	New	Total
Ann Allen	2	202
Jane Lowe	85	1,453
Clare Million	43	849

Ann found Thale Cress *Arabidopsis thaliana* and Treacle-mustard *Erysimum cheiranthoides* new to her list, the latter on waste land by a petrol station in Harrow. She records plants at St. Mary's church, Harrow-on-the-Hill, for the burial ground conservation charity 'Caring for God's Acre' and looks out for Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* for her residents' association.

On a train journey I, **Jane**, spotted Maidenhair Fern *Adiantum capillus-veneris* hanging from the walls of North Dulwich station. The train only stopped briefly, so I went back to check and found 40 plant species growing there, and Hairy-footed Flower Bees nesting. There were several orchids on my 2025 list, including Monkey Orchid *Orchis simia* and its hybrid with Lady Orchid *Orchis purpurea* = *O. x angusticruris*

at the WFS Hartslock meeting,



Military Orchid

Military Orchid *O. militaris* on a visit to Homefield Wood, Buckinghamshire, Coralroot Orchid *Corallorhiza trifida* at the Aviemore meeting and Lizard Orchid *Himantoglossum hircinum* at a known site on a road verge in Croydon. Within sight of home, but far from its origins in South Africa, I found *Bacopa Chaenostoma cordatum* on a pavement. The highlight of my year was Yellow Bird's-nest *Hypopitys monotropa*, which I had long wanted to see in flower. I saw ssp. *monotropa* at Selsdon Wood, Croydon, prompted by a posting on the reserve's Friends Facebook group, and ssp. *hypophegea* near Aviemore, on the WFS meeting led by Ian Green.

Clare's star plant was Herb-Paris *Paris quadrifolia*, strange and sculptural on a quiet lane in Shropshire. At Climping Beach, Sussex, she saw Bur Chervil *Anthriscus caucalis* and Little-Robin *Geranium purpureum*. She found Cornish Heath *Erica vagans* on the Lizard, sadly the only interesting plant on a very wet trip, and a large

expanse of Pepper-saxifrage *Silaum silaus* on the airfield at Bembridge, Isle of Wight. On an orchid tour in Kent, led by Jon Dunn, she saw Musk Orchid *Herminium monorchis*, Lady Orchid and Late Spider-orchid *Ophrys fuciflora* among others. Clare has also been involved in local recording for the Surrey Botanical Society (SBS). On a neglected semi-industrial site in Wimbledon she found 81 species, some of which were new to her list, including Ribbed Melilot *Melilotus officinalis* and Grey Field-speedwell *Veronica polita*. She saw Clammy Goosefoot *Dysphania pumilio*, native to Australia, at a filming location near Farnham Heath on an SBS meeting and Curled Pondweed *Potamogeton crispus* at Mitcham Common on a London Natural History Society meeting. We have several new members who are getting involved, coming to field meetings, starting diaries and taking part in wider botanical activities, including the BSBI 100 Plants in 2026 Challenge. I wish you all a good season in 2026.

JANE LOWE

SCOTLAND and IRELAND

I'm having to start my reports this time with an apology; instead of getting them written in the middle of winter and getting in touch to thank members for their news and records and wish them well for the new season, because of various annoying home problems, I'm only doing this on the last day of the Spring Week Hunt! I feel slightly less guilty about this delay for Scottish members as

the season starts later 'up there', but I still hope that the late return of diaries etc. will not have been too frustrating. Please also forgive me if I have neglected to reply to any communications. I flag WFS emails on my laptop, but given the disorder of life here this winter and spring, I might have 'lost' the odd message.

The drought during summer 2025,

followed by various storms and one of the most lightless winters I can remember, seems to have depressed many of us, and I seem to have had news from fewer members than usual. I know what an effort it is to get in touch, and the whole report system was upset by my very tiresome change of email address, but please, when you read this, make a resolution to keep in touch during the year or when the season feels over to you. The great Scottish botanist Mary McCallum Webster used to say that her recording season was over when the grasses finished flowering, and we all have our own times for feeling an end to our botanising year.

It's a happy chance for me, as secretary of the Scottish and Irish Branch, that 'B' comes so early in the alphabet as **Jim Blackwood** is a marvellous correspondent to lead me into the report. He is always very active, leading walks, writing articles for *Trifoliate*, the excellent publication which covers botanical news and views for Dunbartonshire, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire, and attending every possible meeting. His mother celebrated her 91st birthday this winter so much time is spent with her, but botanising is always high on his to-do list. Jim was specially thrilled on a BSBI Renfrewshire network meeting, when the group managed to refind Coralroot Orchid *Corallorhiza trifida* from a 30-year-old record! 'As fastidious a plant as one can find, it was contentedly growing amongst mosses, deep in the wet shade of a willow carr. It was a thrilling first for me...'. He also revisited and photographed local favourites, as he does each year,

telling me how these familiar plants (such as Globeflower *Trollius europaeus*) 'soothe the soul and enhance botanical joy'. I so agree!

Hilary Blyth sent me an actual diary - such a treat for an oldie like me, who has lived with, and loved, the many versions over many years. Most of her records are from home at Scotnish, near Lochgilphead, where she keeps a careful eye on both common and special local plants, including favourites of mine such as Narrow-leaved Helleborine *Cephalanthera longifolia* and the delightfully quaint White Butterbur *Petasites albus*. Her only time away was a trip to Lancaster but as this was during a heatwave, she added few plants. Much of her summer was dominated by contractors for the Argyll Countryside Trust clearing eight acres of rhododendron - during this she learned how to handle the terrifying poison needed to control re-growth so that she can now monitor both their own and community land. By chance, she records two other potential invasive baddies - one of the shrubby, ericaceous *Gaultheria* species and American Skunk-cabbage *Lysichiton americanus*, which I find wonderful-looking but which now has an evil reputation! Hopefully they will stay within the bounds where Hilary saw them. She has also been asked to record a monardella in detail for the BSBI, which I'm sure will really suit the careful way she botanises.

Janet Clapton also had a very busy summer. She is still determined to become really familiar with the Scottish flora (Bute seems to inspire

energetic botanising!) to see how it differs from that of southern England, where she lived in the 1980s. She reports the local Sea Radish *Raphanus raphanistrum* ssp. *maritimus* hybrid and Northern Marsh -orchid *Dactylorhiza purpurella* as new to her cumulative list, which reached 352 this year, and gives high praise to Angus Hannah's Bute Flora and Scottish Bramble books and to his personal help - what an excellent guru he sounds! One outing became a near-disaster though, when she and a friend had to be rescued by a ranger from an area where fires had destroyed path markers and bracken had become more than head-high! Trips to good places including the Chilterns and Lindisfarne added exciting plants, but Janet has decided to keep a Bute-only list in 2026 while attending every WFS meeting she can, and the Scottish Botanists' Conference, which she says was great in 2025.

Ian Green keeps very busy in his patch of Moray, Nairn and Inverness, and during the winter of 2025/26 has been active in his former county of Somerset, where he and his twin brother Paul have been dealing with family business. Every time they visit, they send challenging emails out to us locals - this spring setting off well-directed hunts for the rarest of the *Erophilas*. We now have a good grip on Hairy Whitlowgrass *E. majuscula*, confirming and extending nineteenth century records, and are most grateful for Green guidance on this confusing group!

Hamlyn and Amanda Jones are always botanising with high rates of

energy and great skill. Hamlyn's report to me admits to organising 'a lot of field trips' and saying how he enjoyed the WFS meeting on Jersey because there he was 'just a co-organiser with little responsibility and could just relax and botanise'. He hosted an ambitious three-day meeting in eastern Scotland, which yielded Henbane *Hyoscyamus niger* and a fine new population of the rare Baltic Rush *Juncus balticus* in a locality where it had been feared extinct. A day in the mountains to see Alpine Catchfly *Silene suecica* on



Photo: Hamlyn/Amanda Jones

Alpine Catchfly

Little Kilrannoch did have to be abandoned at lunchtime because of hail, but the days must all have been memorable, and finds included several real rarities for sedge nerds!

Then there were the WFS trip to Switzerland, monthly walks for the BSBI in Fife, and organising bryology outings - I can only admire such dedication and look forward to the various meeting reports for more detail.

Janet Macpherson's health has grounded her recently, but her interest in plants has not diminished. Her daughter Kirsty has been building herself a house on their land beside a big burn near Daviot and a prime consideration for the project has been the preservation and future management of the deliciously orchid-rich meadows which border their area of birch wood. I've loved seeing these grasslands in flower, and it has been great hearing about the care that is being taken to keep them in good condition.

Ali Shuttleworth lives at Dalgety Bay, Fife, where he has been recording a 10km square which covers a great range of habitats. His list includes many good plants, but as the records cover about 10 years' recording, I needed to recommend that he submit it to the 10km Square Study (North) rather than for an annual branch report. I couldn't resist going through it though, as it includes plants from widely differing habitats such as the coast, arable land, woodland, heath, and many places where garden escapes can get a toe-hold. The total for his square is now 547, which really does prove the richness of his chosen area. Scots Lovage *Ligusticum scoticum* brought me happy memories of the Hebrides, some of the neutral soil arable weeds such as Corn Spurrey *Spergula*

arvensis and Field Penny-cress *Thlaspi arvense* are pleasing to see on his list now that they are so threatened, and I was fascinated to see White Ramping-fumitory *Fumaria capreolata* so far from what I consider its heartland around Minehead in West Somerset! Another happy memory was stirred by Ali seeing Lawn-lobelia *Pratia angulata*, because the first place I ever saw this tiny garden plant established was in Mary McCallum Webster's lawn in Dyke-by-Forres!

Audrey Turner reports quite a difficult year. Both she and her husband had health problems, preventing her from leading WFS walks, and the Inverness Botany Group New Year Hunt had to be cancelled when Aviemore was under eight inches of snow. However, she added four plants to her cumulative list, which now totals 852. Two of these, Large Bindweed *Calystegia sylvatica* and Whorled Mint *Mentha x verticillata* wouldn't be particular thrills in southern Britain, but the Bindweed is only the second record for the Cairngorm National Park. Her third plant, Betony *Betonica officinalis*, is now known to be extremely threatened with the massive losses of unimproved grasslands, but the fourth is a real one-off! Audrey found a jolly flowering bush of the familiar garden shrub Darwin's Barberry *Berberis darwinii* in the most unusual habitat of the river wall near the harbour in Nairn. Her photograph just lights up the day for anyone seeing it! For the confirmation of this curious record Audrey tells me she is grateful to Andy Amphlett. He and Ian Green sound always wonderfully ready to

help with unusual plants.

I hope that by the time that this is in print, a delightful summer will be underway - not too hot or too cold and without any named storms.

Please get in touch if you have any questions that I might be able to help with, and send me interesting news at any time.

RO FITZGERALD

PARNASSUS 1

	New	Cumulative
Julie Clarke	18	4,250
Alan Leslie	62	3,603
Carol Hawkins	77	3,538
Stephen Clarkson	41	3,296
Ted Pratt	0	3,182
Paul Harmes	113	3,158
Marion Chappell	6	3,051
John Hawsford	0	3,014
Judith Cox	78	2,996
Ron Parker	0	2,935
Paul Green	95	2,891
Jan Armishaw	36	2,850
Sheila Wynn	66	2,809
Gareth Bursnall	42	2,752
Heather Colls	1	2,681
Priscilla Nobbs	37	2,645
Nick Aston	618	2,634

Another year of exciting finds found many Parnassians focusing their forensic attention on any variants that came their way, whilst hardly a dandelion was allowed to go unobserved and unusual hybrids

were, as always, grist to the recording mill, together with a raft of exotic aliens. What a feast!

Julie Clarke could almost expect to be resting on her laurels but no!; she

had nine Lancashire dandelions determined for her by David Shaw (and confirmed by the BSBI referee John Richards), as well as three hawkweeds similarly expertly verified, including the British endemic Arnside Hawkweed *Hieracium arnsidense*, from Arnside Knott, which has only been described relatively recently. I was also particularly intrigued by her record of the unusual Iberian endemic figwort *Scrophularia grandiflora*, which has appeared in a hedgerow at Slackhead, Cumbria, with no obvious garden source nearby. It has unusually large flowers, varying from yellowish-green to orange-red.

At this point, I would normally be reporting on the finds made by Jessé Tregale, but sadly Jessé died last year, leaving many happy memories for his botanical friends of days spent with him in the field, and a grand total of 3,763.

My own year was memorable for many new plants, not least the 40 new dandelions seen on the BSBI dandelion weekend on the Isle of Wight, all vouched for by John Richards in the field. I think some of it sank in and the experience has left me keen to keep looking at them in Cambridgeshire. In the latter county, two of my most rewarding discoveries were the presence of Greater Bur-marigold *Bidens radiata* in a winter-wet field at Cottenham, just north of Cambridge, and a large number of self-sown young plants of the alien deciduous conifer Dawn Redwood *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* along King Street in the city. The *Bidens* had been found in Yorkshire the same week, these being the first

confirmed British records for this European species, which may have reached us with migrating birds. Perhaps even more remarkable was the presence of Saltmarsh Goosefoot *Oxybasis chenopodioides* in the same field, perhaps the first such record away from the coast for this species.

Carol Hawkins had another good year, much of it spent chasing plants in the company of Nick Aston, with forays to the Isles of Scilly, yielding Vietnamese Coriander *Persicaria odorata* and Creeping Groundsel *Senecio angulatus*, both on St. Mary's, plus a whistlestop tour to see no fewer than 17 whitebeam *Sorbus* species in North Somerset, West Gloucestershire and southern Wales, including the most recently distinguished species, Wynd Cliff Whitebeam *Sorbus wyensis*, in Wynd Cliff quarry, St. Arvans, in Monmouthshire. Perhaps surprisingly, her plant of the year was White Mignonette *Reseda alba*, from dunes at Earlsferry, Fife, but I know how it is not always the extreme rarities that give great pleasure and tracking down something that has been elusive for so long is always a special moment. Mind you, I doubt many would pass up the chance for such a rare fern hybrid as *Asplenium x clermontiae* (Maidenhair Spleenwort *A. trichomanes* x Wall-rue *A. rutamuraria*), on a wall in Craster, Northumberland, nor an equally unusual sedge hybrid in *Carex x tournabenii* (Distant Sedge *C. distans* x Long-bracted Sedge *C. extensa*), from a saltmarsh on Holy Island.

Stephen Clarkson made the trip

down to the very productively weedy Monkton Elm Garden Centre, near Taunton, Somerset, which has produced some unusual aliens recently, with Common Andryala *Andryala integrifolia* being the best of his additions on this occasion. I was pleased to see that he had found Hairy Whitlowgrass *Erophila majuscula* at Icklingham Triangle in Suffolk; this diploid form of whitlowgrass grows here with the polyploid Common Whitlowgrass *E. verna* and looks very distinct, as it does elsewhere in Breckland. Joining Gareth Bursnall's meeting at Eastbourne, East Sussex, gave him a long list of aliens self-sowing along the promenade, including Ivory Sea-holly *Eryngium paniculatum* and Tasmanian Flax-lily *Dianella tasmanica*, whilst my own meeting in Cambridge produced Glaucous Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster glaucophyllus* and Gmelin's Willow *Salix gmelinii*, both long-known on the old Chesterton Sidings, and Small Love-grass *Eragrostis minor* as a naturalised street weed nearby.

Unfortunately, **Ted Pratt** had not been able to let me know about his finds in 2025 at the time of writing this report, but I hope to include them next time around.

Paul Harmes also benefited from the dandelion meeting on the Isle of Wight, with no fewer than 71 new species added to his list. It was a lot to digest all at once but it was instructive to see the expert taraxacologists at work and to begin to realise the strong ecological preferences between the various species and sections of the genus.

Something of a dandelion lookalike in flower, Smooth Golden-fleece *Urospermum dalechampii* was an unexpected entry which he saw later in the year, on an overgrown grass verge at Willingdon, East Sussex; this Mediterranean perennial is occasionally grown in gardens for its large heads of pale yellow flowers. Also in East Sussex, some dumped soil on the verge of the A275 near Cooksbridge produced some decorative alien annuals, including Tricoloured Convolvulus *Convolvulus tricolor* and two colour-variants of Crown Daisy *Glebionis coronaria*: var. *coronaria* and var. *discolor*. Paul has recently moved to March, in the Cambridgeshire fens, so I expect an East Anglian bias to his records in 2026!

By early August, **Marion Chappell** was resigned to perhaps only having one new entry, for a Thrift cultivar, *Armeria* 'Armada Rose', from Knott End-on-Sea, Lancashire, which had been determined by Julie Clarke, but a few weeks later, Crimson Clover

Photo: Sue Southall



Crimson Clover

Trifolium incarnatum provided her with another new record, from a field edge at Maghull, also Lancashire. Then, in mid-September, a phone call from Julie alerted her to some new finds, so, in her words, 'naturally I raced up the M6 in torrential rain' to see Himalayan *Acanthus Strobilanthus atropurpurea* in a hedgerow at Storth, Velvetleaf *Abutilon theophrasti* in a maize field at Burton-in-Kendal, together with Irish Scaly-male-fern *Dryopteris kerryensis* in Teddy Heights Wood, all in Cumbria. Her final record of the year, in early November, was a variegated form of Slender Sweet-flag *Acorus gramineus* 'Variegatus', from a pond at Ainsdale, Lancashire.

John Hawksford has been struggling with ill health and as a consequence has been unable to add to his total, but he sent me a wonderfully positive email suggesting that, despite everything, he was determined this year to get to a site for Cape-pondweed *Aponogeton distachyos* which has recently been reported to him not far from his home. There is nothing like the prospect of a new plant to keep one looking forward!

Ron Parker is another who experienced some health problems in 2025 and has not been able to report any additions and I wish him too better luck in 2026.

Judith Cox celebrated her 80th year with visits to different places every month, although not all were flower-related. One of these was to join the Society meeting in the New Forest in June, where Hatchet Pond yielded all

the native treasures one might expect, and Lyons Hill Bog provided two good aliens: Highbush Blueberry *Vaccinium corymbosum* and American Cranberry *V. macrocarpon*. She also visited the Monkton Elm Garden Centre in Somerset, adding amongst others the alien Land Starwort *Callitriche terrestris*, whilst there was an enviable haul from the much-visited Honeybourne Line in Cheltenham. The latter included Fang's Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster fangianus*, Sawara Cypress *Cupressus pisifera* and Leyland Cypress, which seems to have so many scientific names now it would seem best to stick to the common name (it is *Cupressus x leylandii* in the fourth edition of Stace). As she suggests, this year should see Judith join the 3,000 club!

Jan Armishaw is one of those with an especially keen eye for variants, and works hard to find acceptable names for them, which can in itself be quite a formidable task. She was especially pleased to see a self or bird-sown plant of the fastigiate form of Yew, *Taxus baccata* f. *fastigiata*, in a graveyard in Canterbury, whilst a purple-leaved variant of Tutsan *Hypericum androsaemum*, 'Albury Purple', came from a wall at Charing, also in Kent. Rather further from home, indeed in North Wales, at Trefriw, she discovered an attractive and rarely-recorded variant of Common Evening-primrose *Oenothera biennis* f. *sulphurea*, with pale lemon-yellow flowers. Her Siberian Melick *Melica altissima* 'Atropurpurea' was yet another ornamental alien, well-known in cultivation for its rich purple spikelets

and in this case found on grassy waste ground in Faversham, Kent. In my experience, it comes true from seed.

Paul Green has had another rewarding year after his recent return to Parnassus recording and breaking the 3,000 barrier looks to be well within his sights now. Many of his records come from Ireland and included Red Duckweed *Lemna turionifera* in Tacumshin Lake, Co. Wexford, which, remarkably, he found in flower (how many of us have ever seen a duckweed flower?), plus a raft of exciting pondweed hybrids, which were the records he most enjoyed seeing last year, quite the best being *Potamogeton x vespicus* (Broad-leaved Pondweed *P. natans* x Long-stalked Pondweed *P. praelongus*) in the Cloghaun River in Co. Clare, the only area where it is known in the British Isles.

Remarkably, he recorded another site for *Asplenium x clermontiae*, with both parents on a wall in Killarney, Co. Kerry, and had one of the best bird-seed aliens I have heard of for a while in the shape of African Turnip-weed *Sisymbrium runcinatum* (confirmed by Tim Rich), which appeared in his garden in Yoletown, Co. Wexford. His list is full of other good things of which I must also mention Bridal-wreath *Francoa appendiculata*, self-sown on a tall wall at Tintern Abbey (Co. Wexford, not the one in Monmouthshire!).

Sheila Wynn had just a few Irish records, but these included Kerry Lily *Simethis mattiazzii* at Derrynane. Co. Kerry - always a plant that makes a red-letter day for any recorder! She

was also present for the run round all the whitebeam species mentioned above and earlier in the year added another two recently-named Yorkshire hawkweeds: Dentdale Hawkweed *Hieracium dentdaleense*, on a railway bridge in Dentdale, and Langscar Hawkweed *H. langscariense*, on Langscar rocks at Malham, both expertly verified. Sheila also attended my meeting in Cambridge, so benefited from some unusual willowherbs, including the alien variant of Square-stalked Willowherb *Epilobium tetragonum* ssp. *tournefortii* and its hybrids with ssp. *tetragonum*, Great Willowherb *E. hirsutum* and Hoary Willowherb *E. parviflorum* in a wonderful mixed population at Hardwick. Later in the year, a trip to the Dengie Peninsula in Essex provided one of the controversial elm 'splits', the Peninsula Elm *Ulmus peninsularis*.

Gareth Bursnall by his own admission had a bumper season and sent me a glorious image of his plant of the year, *Tragopogon x mirabilis*, the cross between Goat's-beard *T. pratensis* and Salsify *T. porrifolius*. The outer ligules are a rather rusty red (just tipped with yellow), the inner ligules orange-yellow and the anther columns tipped almost black. This was found in Longrun Meadow on the Society's AGM weekend around Taunton. His own meeting at Eastbourne added several more aliens along the front, including Tripartite Eryngo *Eryngium x tripartitum* and Cape Gooseberry *Physalis peruviana*, whilst Judith Cox's meeting in Cumbria produced his shrub of the year in Silverberry *Elaeagnus commutata*, growing on

waste ground at Oldside, Workington. The Cambridge meeting added 16 new to his list, including the probably overlooked hybrid between Grey Alder *Alnus incana* and Italian Alder *A. cordata*, self-sown on a ditchbank in Hobson's Park.

Hidden Bittercress *Cardamine occulta* may have been **Heather Colls'** only addition in 2025 but she showed considerable determination to add it to her list, having heard about its presence as a weed in Woods Nursery, near Usk, through a report by the Vice-county Recorder in a Gwent county newsletter. Having been taken to the nursery for a cup of tea, she made sure that on walking to the nursery café she 'weeded' a few pots on the way and then checked the plants out on returning home. Identifying these annual *Cardamines* is now quite a task as one sees at least four as nursery weeds: Hairy Bittercress *C. hirsuta*, Wavy Bittercress *C. flexuosa*, New Zealand Bittercress *C. corymbosa* and *C. occulta*. All can show variation depending on growing conditions.

Priscilla Nobbs almost doubled her score of new finds from the previous year and benefited from several WFS excursions. She recorded Aizoon Stonecrop *Phedimus aizoon*, self-sown on a wall at Muncaster Castle, and visited the Red Rose of Lancaster *Rosa gallica* site on sand dunes at Maryport Seabanks, whilst her record for the white variant of Japanese Rose, *R. rugosa* 'Alba', came from sand dunes at Allonby (all in Cumbria). Down south, a visit to Cambridge yielded amongst others the long-flowering, stolon-free variant

of Wild Strawberry, *Fragaria vesca* f. *semperflorens*, on the old Chesterton Sidings, and the rather seldom-recorded Swamp Meadow-grass *Poa palustris* from an overgrown run-off pit below Girton, where it is established with American Slough-grass *Beckmannia syzigachne*.

Finally, **Nick Aston** reaches us with a phenomenal total in one year, the result of a lot of hard work in the field (all over Britain), as well as bringing in non-Stace records stored up over the years, looking out for omissions in his previous records and casting a critical eye over potential variants - a real tour de force from which is hard to pick out a few to mention. Amongst his 18 cotoneasters he was especially pleased with Dartford Cotoneaster *C. obtusus* on Portsdown Hill and I was envious of his Sherriff's Cotoneaster *C. sherriffii* from Mogshade Hill, Ringwood (both in Hampshire), and both determined by the cotoneaster referee Jeanette Fryer. He also mentions the particular pleasure in finding Field Marigold *Calendula arvensis* as an arable weed on St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly, and the absolute gem represented by Alpine Catchfly *Silene suecica* on the serpentine rocks of Little Kilrannoch, Angus, after the 'long slog' up Jock's Road to reach the site. I cannot resist citing a few more to show the breadth of his recording: Climbing Butcher's-broom *Semele androgyna* in Tresco Abbey Woods, Isles of Scilly, Avocado *Persea americana*, a 2024 record from a London park in Islington, Silky-spike Melick *Melica ciliata* ssp. *transsilvanica*, self-sown on a street in Cambridge and one for which other Parnassians might want

to take note of its name; and a white-flowered variant of Common Hemp-nettle *Galeopsis tetrahit* f. *albiflora*, from woodland rides at Lowton's Copse, Clanfield, Hampshire.

As always, it has been a pleasure to read the lists, not only to be reminded of past visits of my own to many of

the sites mentioned, but also for how much I learn from all the work many of you do to track down names for variants and for the news of the many new aliens that continue to be discovered. More please in 2026!

ALAN LESLIE

PARNASSUS 2

Cumulative	New	Total
Sue Southall	105	2,530
Janice Reynolds	2	2,431
John Martin	40	2,419
Geoffrey Kitchener	14	2,311
Peter Jepson	9	2,218
Ro FitzGerald	13	2,132
Everald Ellis	0	2,109
Ted Phenna	11	2,076
Dorothy Bullock	0	2,057

It's that time of the year again when I sit down to work my way through your diaries, enjoying your excursions from last summer. It was a very warm year, with a very mild autumn and early winter. However, Jack Frost has put in several recent appearances, and we have one dusting of snow, as I write this.

In October 2025, my wife and I moved to Cambridgeshire from East Sussex. Rolling chalk hills replaced with wide open fenland. Big skies and a whole new flora to enjoy.

I will begin with **Sue**, who travelled

far and wide during her recording season. Her list includes critical species such as hawkweeds *Hieracium* spp and whitebeams *Sorbus* spp, together with some garden escapes and native plants. Gareth Bursnall and Priscilla Nobbs' meeting on Eastbourne seafront produced convincing naturalised Blue Cupidone *Catananche caerulea*, Blue Leadwort *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides* and Mediterranean Beach-daisy *Pallenis maritima*. On a visit to Cumbria, Sue added Shaggy-stalked Hawkweed *Hieracium ampliatum* and False Porrect-bracted Hawkweed *H. pseudosubcyaneum*

on Arnside Knott, as well as Weedy Hawkweed *H. oblongum* at Gait Barrows NNR. Finally, a visit to the Avon Gorge, Bristol, led by Libby Houston, yielded the recently-described Observatory Whitebeam *Sorbus spectans*, Round-leaved Whitebeam *S. eminens* and English Whitebeam *S. anglica*. Sue now makes the transition to Parnassus 1 and I would like to offer her my congratulations and best wishes for her future recording.

In East Sussex, **Janice** only added two records to her diary last year: Boissier's Glory-of-the-snow *Scilla luciliae*, naturalised on the margins of Seaford Head golf-course, and Crown Daisy *Glebionis coronaria*, as a casual on a public open space between Grand Avenue and Princess Drive, East Blatchington.

Here, I must apologise for an error in the total of records that **John** has accumulated. I seem to have omitted to update his total for 2024. It read 2,227 but should have read 2,379. I have now amended his total. At home, in Shropshire, John reported Guernsey Pigweed *Amaranthus blitum* as a weed of cultivation at Crossways, and he also added the 'garden centre weed' Asian Bittercress *Cardamine occulta* at Emstrey Bank and English Eyebright *Euphrasia officinalis* ssp. *anglica* at Oswestry racecourse. Further afield, he found Ripgut Brome *Anisantha rigida* at St.Ouen's Bay, Jersey, Red Angel's-trumpet *Brugmansia sanguinea* in garden waste on St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly, and Plymouth Thistle *Carduus pycnocephalus* at its

classic site below The Hoe, Plymouth.

All of **Geoffrey's** records were found in Surrey and Kent. We begin with a visit to West Wickham. Here he found Jersey Love-grass *Eragrostis pilosa* as 'an abundant gutter-weed'. Likewise, Guernsey Pigweed *Amaranthus blitum*, also plentiful as a pavement weed. His third offering from the town was another pavement weed, Mexican Aster *Cosmos bipinnatus*. In Tonbridge, between the river and a public footpath, he discovered a single seedling of Chusan Palm *Trachycarpus fortunei*.

Ro tells me that the domestic issues that have affected her botanising in past years have reduced somewhat and the result is an interesting and diverse list, compiled in the most part, it appears, whilst 'square-bashing' along the north coast of Somerset. Let us begin with Longspine Thorn-apple *Datura ferox*, as an adventive in a mulched area of her garden, and Hairy Rocket *Erucastrum gallicum*, which appeared under her bird-table. When recording in Watchet, she recorded clumps of the bluish subspecies of Red Fescue *Festuca rubra* ssp. *junceae* as well as Least Yellow-sorrel *Oxalis exilis* and Creeping Zinnia *Sanvitalia procumbens*, both as pavement weeds. Lastly, at East Quantoxhead, she reported finding Caucasian Germander *Teucrium hircanicum* 'Purple Tails'.

Meanwhile, in North Wales, **Ted** had some nice records to add to his diary. Keeled Garlic *Allium carinatum* and



Ragweed

on-Sea. Here, he also added the fertile oak hybrid *Quercus x rosacea* (Sessile Oak *Q. petraea* x English Oak *Q. robur*). Add to these Glabrous Whitlowgrass *Erophila glabrescens*, on the dunes at West Beach, Llandudno, and Ragweed *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, at Llandudno Junction, you have a varied and interesting list.

As always, it has been a fascinating insight into everyone's season, and it has been rewarding to share your records.

It just remains for me to wish everybody a happy and fruitful 2026 season, and may you find lots of exciting additions to your diaries.

PAUL HARMES

Aunt-Eliza *Crocsmia paniculata* were recorded on Bryn Eurn, Rhos-

EXOTICS REPORT 2025



Photo: Anthony/Rita Grainger

Photo: Anthony/Rita Grainger

Bridal-wreath

At last, I can bring this column closer to its founding criteria, as I have a record to share made not by myself but by WFS members Anthony and Rita Grainger. It is of Bridal-wreath *Francoa appendiculata*, a single plant of which they found on a roadside verge on Holy Island in mid-July 2025. Their photograph shows the sort of habitat where it was growing as well as what the plant itself looks like. They are in no doubt about its status as a garden escape. Not long before I received their report, I had been made aware of seemingly naturalised plants on a wall at Cawdor Castle in Scotland (see *BSBI News* 160, p. 37). The RHS Plant Finder gives more than 30 suppliers,

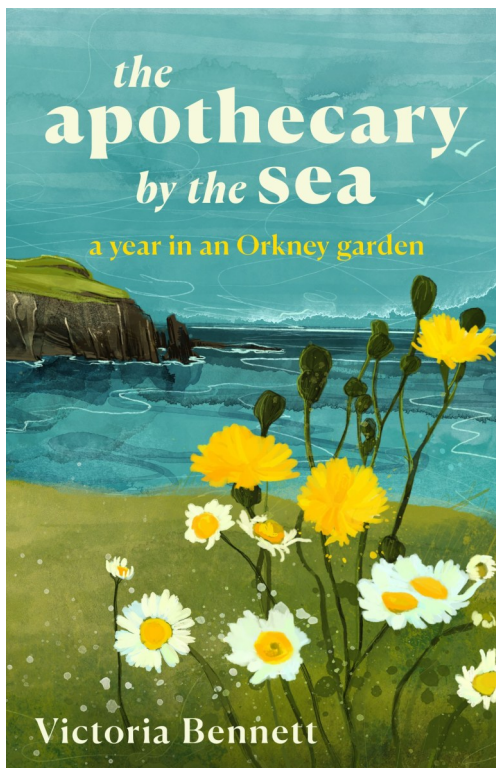
indicating, perhaps, a certain popularity among gardeners (without making a special effort I have noticed it growing in at least two Eastbourne gardens), as well as a certain potential for further observations of the sort passed on to me by Anthony and Rita. Bridal-wreath is from temperate regions of Chile and so far, the records for escapes in Britain show no obvious regional

preference, unlike the situation for Feather-top *Pennisetum villosum*, the species dealt with in the previous column, where all the records so far seem to fall in the southern/south-eastern portion of the country.

MATTHEW BERRY

BOOK REVIEWS

***The Apothecary by the Sea – a year in an Orkney garden:* Victoria Bennett: Elliott&Thompson (2026): ISBN 978-1-78396-934-0: Paperback £16.99**



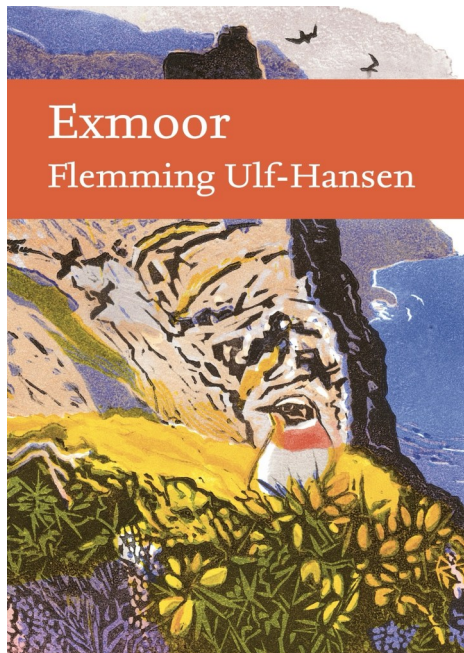
Among the many current books which focus on how plants, flowers and gardening can support mental and physical health and help heal the effects of trauma, this is an unusually interesting one. It tells the story of a family's brave move to Orkney to establish a new life after extreme stresses of grief and ill-health struck them, and how they began to recover there with the help of wild flowers. Of course the author being an apothecary herself is deeply aware of plants, but the Orkney flora was new to her and she sinks herself into it, not just learning the species but finding out about their mythology and folk uses. Each plant described is given its Orcadian name – opening the book at random I find that *Angelica sylvestris* is called 'Spoot Girls' which is delightful. Most plants have a beautiful ink wash portrait by Victoria's husband Adam Clarke, and these are most evocative. Even if you don't want to know the dozens of historic (and often weird) medicinal uses of familiar plants, or if as field botanist you find the little 'Habitat'

tags rather pointless, it's a special book with a fascinating story line and many delightful additions to our

knowledge of both rare and common wild flowers.

RO FITZGERALD

**Exmoor: Flemming Ulf-Hansen:
William Collins, New Naturalist
Library (2025): ISBN 978-0-00-
838071-7: Hardback £65.**



biodiversity. I feel deeply responsible for making the WFS aware of its importance. The valuable review copy feels undeserved because I feel overwhelmed by the sheer amount of information it contains from details of the plants, birds and animals which I'm lucky enough to be familiar with, to extreme technicalities of conservation law and practice. How to do justice to all this? It would take 1000s of words and my notes would be pathetically feeble compared to Flemming's!

It's not a book one can just sit down and read through – the scale is just too large – but it is one of the most superb reference books imaginable. One can look up geographical, historical and biological subjects illustrated by excellent photographs, and consult the legal supports or constraints which are necessary to govern this huge area with both its biodiverse and social aspects. The opening chapter is called 'The Essence of Exmoor' and from there one can move to elements of coast, moor, woodland and farm. It's a brilliant reference book and truly enriching for anyone who wants to know about the wonderful world of Exmoor.

RO FITZGERALD

I have felt quite frightened when faced with this book. Not only is it the 150th issue of the famous New Naturalist series which has guided so many of our lives for decades, but as a Somerset resident I'm aware of the colossal amount of time and work which the author has given to Exmoor, to its management and conservation as well as to learning its

**A TASTER OF THE UP-COMING REPORTS OF THE
THREE MENORCA MEETINGS.**

18th-25th March 2026, 15th-22th April 2026 and 13th-20th MAY 2026.



OBITUARY:
DAVID BEVAN 26th MAY 1940 - 1st JANUARY 2026



David Bevan died on New Year's Day 2026 at the age of eighty-five. He was a major figure in the botanical and conservation worlds in London for many years and a WFS Branch Secretary from 1988 to 2020.

He was the eldest of three brothers and was born in the perilous month of May 1940. It was only four days after his birth that news came through that his father, a doctor serving with the army, had been evacuated from Dunkirk. Although the family lived in London, he went to boarding school in the rural setting of Bryanston in Dorset, where he pursued interests in butterflies and wild flowers. Another countryside connection which continued throughout his life was the family's holiday home on the edge of the Ashdown Forest in Sussex. His father was a keen horticulturalist,

some of his plantings there spreading outside the garden.

David also enjoyed acting and poetry and, as his brother Nicholas recounted at his funeral, he was a dreamer rather than being academically inclined. He took a long time to find a career which suited him. An attempt to follow in his father's footsteps into medicine had to be abandoned. He worked in a photographic shop and one of the early reports of his finds in the Wild Flower Magazine mentions plants that he had found in north London gardens where he worked as a jobbing gardener.

Things changed after he took a conservation qualification at Birkbeck College. His tutor there told him that he ought to teach and he began doing so at the Highgate Literary & Scientific

Institution and elsewhere. In 1989 he became Conservation Officer for the London Borough of Haringey, responsible for both ancient woodlands now surrounded by suburbia, such as Coldfall and Queen's Woods, and ex-industrial sites like his base at Railway Fields, near Finsbury Park, and the former railway line which became the Parkland Walk. His work combined conservation work, such as reintroducing coppicing to the woods and seeing what emerged from the buried seedbank, with education, introducing groups from local schools to nature at Railway Fields.

David married Barbara, who already had three children, Kelly, Lisa and Simon, in 1977 and they added Ben to a family which now includes several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. David derived enormous pleasure from family life though it was not without its sadnesses, above all the death of Simon while a student.

It was at Railway Fields that David made perhaps his best-known botanical discovery in 1987: the first occurrence in the wild of the hybrid between Japanese Knotweed and Russian Vine, now known as *X Reyllopa conollyana*. He obviously had a very good eye for hybrids as another of his discoveries was the white-flowered form of the hybrid between Cuckooflower and Wavy Bitter-cress *Cardamine x fringsii*, known in London circles at least as Bevan's Bitter-cress.

David's first mention in the Wild Flower Magazine was in the Greater London Branch report for 1980, in which

Rodney Burton described him as "a new member but obviously no novice" who had found some "extraordinary things". By 1984 he was in Valhalla (now obsolete) and the reports of his finds in London and elsewhere continued until 2017 when his total had reached 1,792. He became Secretary of a Valhalla Branch in 1988 but was perhaps more at home when, in 1995, he took over from Rodney as Secretary of the Greater London Branch. In that capacity his enthusiasm and encouragement were appreciated by London members for the next quarter of a century. He led much appreciated WFS field meetings to his Haringey sites and also the Ashdown Forest.

There has long been much overlap between London WFS members and the London Natural History Society. David was President of the LNHS for 1991 and 1992 and subsequently an Honorary Vice-President. Another role he took over from Rodney was as Chairman of the LNHS Botany Section from 2000 to 2021. He also chaired the Ecology and Conservation Studies Society, which was established by graduates of the Birkbeck College conservation courses. David was an extremely knowledgeable and careful botanist but wore his learning lightly. In all his roles he will be remembered for his kindness and keenness to help other people to learn.

With thanks to Ben Bevan and to Sheila Wynn for research in old WFS Magazines.

ROBIN BLADES

