Notes RBG Edinb. 38(1):188 (1980)

Book Review

A new vice county check-list.* The area covered by this book is of outstanding beauty—as described by Paul McCartney in his song 'Mull of Kintyre': "mists rolling in from the sea; dark distant mountains and valleys of green"; and as a result of the efforts of the authors the botanically minded can now enjoy such visual delights accompanied by a concise list of the flora to be encountered.

The authors, who have been involved in the recording of plants for a number of years and can be regarded as the local experts, have seen the great majority of plants cited *in situ*. Their work is a comprehensive annotated check-list of the vice-county of Kintyre: a well-marked unit consisting of the peninsula of Kintyre with its offshore small islands and the adjoining area to the north which lies between Tarbert and the Crinan Canal.

The groups dealt with consist of vascular plants, charophytes and bryophytes: nomenclature and order of vascular plants follow that of Dandy (*List of British Vascular Plants*, 1958) while bryophytes follow Paton's *Census Catalogue of British Hepatics* (Edn 4) and Smith's *Check-list of British and Irish Mosses*. The discursive part of the text dealing with geography, habitats, frequency estimates, etc., is extremely brief—only a little more than one and a half pages in fact. The list of taxa is presented in compact, two columns-per-page format, and brief data on frequency, habitat, distribution (localities for the less common species, and presence on a 10 km grid for the more common), and in many cases more general notes are given for each taxon. Almost 2000 angiosperms (including subspp.) are recorded for the area but this number includes many casuals, garden escapes and some old records of species quite likely now extinct. Of the other plant groups there are 50 ferns, 392 mosses, 177 hepatics, 8 charophytes and 3 gymnosperms (the last excluding planted exotics). The book contains some useful appendices, including a bibliography, a section on doubtful taxa, a list of trees planted by the Forestry Commission, and an index of place names.

Despite its title the work does not pretend to be more than an annotated check-list: there are no keys, nor descriptions of taxa, and although species are listed according to the aforementioned works, and therefore essentially in order of families, the families themselves are nowhere mentioned.

The format of the book is clear, concise and businesslike, the text is commendably free from errors and probably by today's standards £10·50 is not too much to pay for a nicely bound, hardback book of 89 pages which essentially must be designed for a very limited market. *The Flora of Kintyre* therefore should be welcomed as a useful addition to the extensive information on regional flora in the British Isles.

D. R. McKean

* *The Flora of Kintyre* by M. H. Cunningham & A. G. Kenneth. 89 pp. 1979. EP Publishing Limited, East Ardsley, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England. [ISBN 07158 1340 4]. Price £10·50.

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