



# Sussex Botanical Recording Society



## NEWSLETTER

No. 48

May 1999

### President's Message

The Secretary of a society plays a key role, and at the AGM we reported that Louise Matcham, who has been SBRs Secretary for nine years, has decided to retire. During these nine years Louise has been dealing with, or forwarding, the general enquiries to the society and the requests from new members; she has kept the membership addresses for mailing labels and despatched our newsletters twice a year. For many years Louise also prepared and typed these newsletters, and she also booked the hall at Staplefield for our spring and autumn meetings. We are very grateful to Louise for all this administrative work.

With Howard, Louise suggested, provided and baked potatoes for the autumn meeting lunches, often with soup, and latterly with cakes for tea baked by Rosetta Harmes, and with a team of helpers. Many members will perhaps think of Louise first at the lunch and tea dispensing counter at Staplefield meetings, and we send her very many thanks for organising this most enjoyable part of the SBRs activities, which contributed substantially to the friendly atmosphere for which the SBRs is known. I am pleased to tell you that Louise will be coming to future meetings, and that baked potatoes are planned again for October 1999.

While saying farewell to Louise, with many thanks from us all for the time and work that she has given to the SBRs, I am pleased to say that we have a volunteer to

succeed her, and we welcome Rita Hemsley, who was elected as Secretary at the AGM - Louise has passed on the administrative papers to Rita:

Mrs. R. Hemsley, 53 Hollingdean Terrace, Brighton BN1 7HB, Tel. 01273 508618

Any members who have not yet met Rita will have the opportunity to do this at the October meeting, or at any of the summer field meetings.

Mary Briggs

### Change in v.c. Recorder

Arthur Hoare has been appointed by the BSBI as Joint Recorder for v.c.14, East Sussex, with Paul Harmes. All correspondence to Paul Harmes.

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### IMPORTANT NOTICE

The meeting place for the Field Meeting on June 26th to the Brightling Mine area has been changed.

We are now meeting at :

TQ677221 - Layby marked 'No Camping, No Caravaning' on the East side of the Burwash/Brightling Road, Approximately 100m South of the British Gypsum entrance

### Hon. Secretary's Note

#### Autumn Get-together

The Autumn Get-together will be at Staplefield Village Hall at 10.00 am. on Saturday 23rd October 1999. Lunch and tea will be available and members are invited to bring books and plants for sale as usual.

Rita Hemsley

#### Newsletter editor

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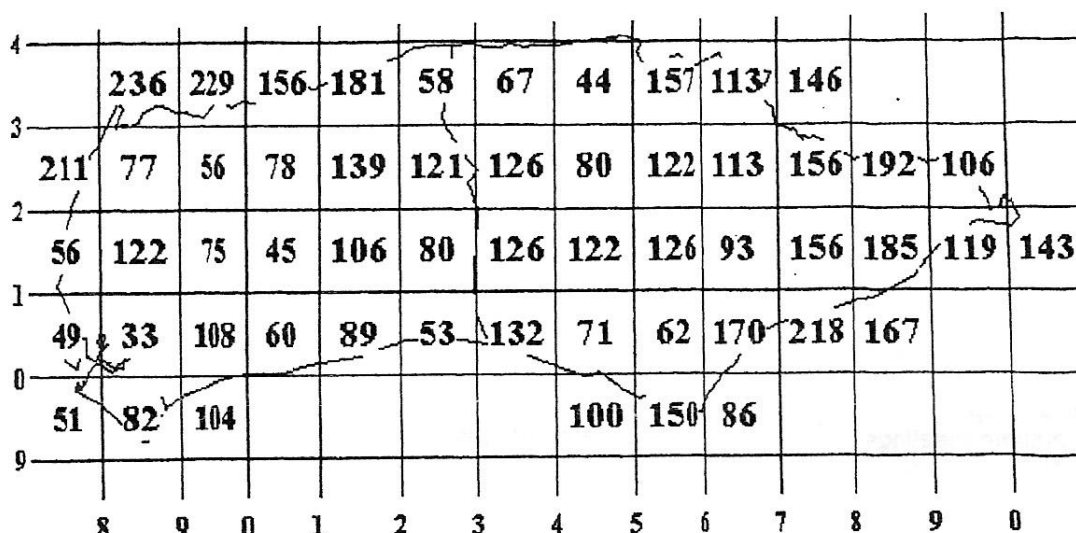
## Atlas 2000 Recording - the last chance

Alan Knapp & Paul Harmes

We would like to make a request for everyone to make a final effort with Atlas 2000 recording. Please have a look at our article in the last Newsletter which describes what we would like you all to do in 1999 to help us fill the gaps in our recording. We would like to repeat one very important message:

**Please send your records to us on a regular basis - say every couple of months or so. Don't save them up for the end of the year as you normally do.** We are going to have a lot of work to do compiling the records in the autumn and if we get masses of new records then we will simply not be able to get them all sent off by the deadline.

We are now able to make some estimate of how well we are doing compared to the Sussex Plant Atlas recording. The map shows our estimate of the difference between the number of records for each 10km square in the Plant Atlas and in our Atlas 2000 recording.



### No. of species present in Sussex Plant Atlas but not yet recorded in Atlas 2000 recording

(estimated from data so far entered, approx. 55% of Sussex Plant Atlas mapped species)

In every square we have recorded fewer species for Atlas 2000 and, in many cases, the difference is large. The difference also varies a lot between species. For some aliens such as *Myriophyllum aquaticum* we have many more records, showing a real increase. Some native species, for example *Trifolium ornithopodioides*, also have records from more 10km squares than the Atlas. This could be due to a real increase but is more likely to be the result of a greater awareness by recorders or deliberate searches for particular species. However, there are a lot of species where we have records from far fewer 10 km squares than the Atlas. Some of the species for which the difference is greatest are listed below.

41	Aira caryophyllea	530	Clinopodium vulgare
42	Aira praecox	589	Cuscuta epithymum
1218	Anchusa arvensis	697	Epilobium palustre
194	Asplenium trichomanes	771	Euphorbia exigua
220	Avena fatua	821	Festuca ovina agg.
341	Carex acutiformis	823	Festuca pratensis
355	Carex caryophyllea	854	Fumaria officinalis
370	Carex echinata	888	Galium verum
407	Carex pseudocyperus	1047	Isolepis setacea

1083 Kickxia spuria	1672 Reseda lutea
1114 Lathyrus nissolia	1348 Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum agg.
1182 Lolium multiflorum	1726 Rubus caesius
1264 Melilotus alba	1771 Sagittaria sagittifolia
1321 Myosotis discolor	1875 Sedum acre
1371 Oenothera glazioviana	1902 Senecio squalidus
1377 Ononis repens	2001 Stachys arvensis
1531 Persicaria lapathifolia	2025 Symphytum x uplandicum
1525 Persicaria bistorta	2058 Thlaspi arvense
1472 Picris hieracioides	2077 Trifolium arvense
1506 Poa pratensis sens. lat.	2085 Trifolium hybridum ssp. hybridum
1546 Polystichum aculeatum	2087 Trifolium medium
1605 Primula veris	2228 Vulpia myuros
1667 Raphanus raphanistrum ssp. raphanistrum	

In some cases, like *Euphorbia exigua*, this difference almost certainly represents a genuine decline but for others the reason is unclear. Has the species declined? Was it over-recorded in the Atlas? Are we missing it in our current recording? What is your view - if you feel that some of these species really have declined please let us know. If you don't believe that there has been a real decline then please demonstrate the fact by going out and producing records!

We would both like to thank those of you who have already sent us records for 1999 and we look forward to receiving lots more from you on a regular basis throughout the year.

Ed. In her President's Message Mary mentioned the friendliness of the SBRS and this is reflected in this "Thank you" from Madeline Reader.

We were encouraged to join the Society, by a member, about 15 years ago. While the countryside had always been of absorbing interest to both me and my husband, we were not experts in any particular field. (Peter's contribution was usually photographic). Joining Mary Briggs on one of her trips to Cyprus had brought to mind that we ought to become more involved in botany, in particular.

At first glance the ages of some of the existing members seemed quite high but this had no bearing on their activities which were more traditionally associated with those with less years on this earth. In membership we found some like-minded souls and, having been involved with one of the S.W.T. reserves (Old Lodge, near Nutley), some familiar faces. In spite of our lack of botanical knowledge we looked forward to the twice yearly meetings and always found much to learn and to enjoy. The vigour of some of the

younger members left us breathless, wondering how they managed to fit in all their recording with work and family life. Tim Rich stands out and his initiative to produce the Ashdown Forest Flora brought a great deal of enthusiasm from the group he gathered together to compile the book. I look back on those few years with particular pleasure and I think we all felt somewhat deflated when the task was finished successfully in 1996. I find I constantly consult the various publications which the Society has been connected, and, living within the Ashdown Forest area, have found them all authoritative works of reference.

Now without transport I do appreciate the help given me, by several members, to enable me to continue to attend the meetings. Thank you all!

Madeline Reader

## ARUM ITALICUM MILL. IN SUSSEX v.c.13 & v.c.14

### An historical review and current status

#### Introduction

In 1995 the County Recorder Mary Briggs noticed the lack of recent records for *Arum italicum* ssp. *neglectum*, the Rare Lords and Ladies, and at the autumn meeting, the time of leaf appearance, asked members of The Sussex Botanical Recording Society to search for the plant. Members took up the challenge and the results of their efforts form the basis of this paper.

*Arum italicum* Mill. was first recorded in Britain at Rew in the Isle of Wight in 1854, and in Sussex at Offington, now part of Worthing, in 1858.

Early botanists did not recognise the two subspecies causing inconsistencies in recording and some difficulty in interpreting historical records.

In 1883 Townsend separated *neglectum* as a variety and in 1938 Ridley re-described it as a separate species. Subsequently Prime recognised the two extremes as subspecies *italicum* and subspecies *neglectum*, the terms currently used.

#### Historical records

Historical records from Arnold 1907, and Wolley-Dod 1937 are incomplete but additional pre 1937 records from the British Museum and Kew were published by Prime, Buckle & Lovis in 1955.

A compilation of all pre 1937 records and notices, together with known or reasonably inferred current taxonomic status is as follows.

Offington	1858	W.W. Saunders	as ssp. <i>italicum</i>
Offington	1859	hb. Borrer	as ssp. <i>italicum</i>
Goring	1858	W.W.Saunders	as ssp. <i>neglectum</i>
Arundel	1858	W.W.Saunders	as ssp. <i>neglectum</i>
Broadwater to Sompting	1858	Searched by Saunders but not found.	
Near Broadwater	1875 *	W.W.Saunders	as ssp. <i>neglectum</i>
Offington Lane	1875 *	W.W.Saunders	as ssp. <i>italicum</i>
Sompting	1881	C. Oakeshott	as ssp. <i>neglectum</i>
Near Arundel	1920	Miss D. Powell teste CES	as ssp. <i>neglectum</i>
Goring	1921	C.E.Salmon	as ssp. <i>neglectum</i>
Broadwater to Sompting	1923 +	HGG	
Offington Lane	1923 +	HGG	as ssp. <i>italicum</i>
Near Southwick	1931	E.Payne, teste Druce	as ssp. <i>neglectum</i>
Cocking	1933	Rev. W.A.Shaw	
Swanbourne Lake & road to Black Rabbit	1935	Mrs. German	as ssp. <i>neglectum</i>
Goring	undated	HGG	as ssp. <i>neglectum</i>
Park Bottom	undated	KP	as ssp. <i>neglectum</i>

+ Believed by Wolley-Dod to have been lost to road widening by 1937.

\* A note attributed to Saunders, with Hemsley's papers at The Booth Museum of Natural History, Brighton notes that at Offington Lane "the plant occurs with white veins to the leaves - the green leaved variety is abundant in the Broadwater locality"

#### *Arum italicum* ssp. *neglectum* (F.Towns.) Prime.

Prime, Buckle & Lovis 1955, *Proceedings of the BSBI* give 43 stations for this plant, all but one of which, Southwick, 1931 had been seen recently.

*The Sussex Plant Atlas* 1980 and *Supplement* 1990 shows 49 tetrad records for West Sussex (v.c.13) and three

for East Sussex (v.c. 14). The East Sussex records, none of which has been refound, were presumed to be introductions as West Sussex was considered to be the easternmost limit of the plant in Britain.

Our survey has produced records for 113 colonies in 46 tetrads in West Sussex and only one record, in a garden at Hailsham, for East Sussex.

In Sussex the plant is usually found on the chalk, but on the coastal plain is found on brickearth and gravels. Only one colony was found on Weald clay, well away from the plants normal distribution in Sussex and the location of this colony on a roadside at Balls Cross suggests that it was introduced.

On the coastal plain sites have been lost to land development and road widening but small colonies can still be found in the hedgerows and on the sides of lanes and roads in urban or semi-urban areas. Additional records on the Downs are almost certainly due to diligent searching rather than an increase in frequency of the plant.

The plant seems to favour damp shady locations often at the base of steep slopes and this is the usual habitat for colonies on the Downs. These colonies are generally quite luxuriant and in their natural environment uninfluenced by man. On the coastal plain, on the other hand, many colonies are very much exposed and apparently quite dry. It is likely that these colonies are managing to survive on sites that, in the past, were more sheltered and damper. This is obviously the case at the Holt Farm colony which in the 1970's was in a small copse. The copse has been removed but the colony persists on a dry west facing bank under *Rubus sp.*

Prior to 1955 the easternmost limit of the plant in Britain was at Lancing Manor, said by Prime, Buckle & Lovis to have been lost to road widening. The site has since been developed as a Sports Centre and in 1995 a single clump was found alongside the car park. Subsequently a few more clumps were found a few metres to the west illustrating the ability of the tubers to survive quite severe disturbance.

A more easterly and earlier record from Wolley-Dod, "near Southwick 1931", by Edward Payne has never been re-found in spite of thorough searching by O. Buckle in the 1950's & 1960's and other botanists since.

A small colony at Coombes, north of Lancing was discovered in 1995 and as this is approximately one km. further east than Lancing Manor, it is now the easternmost limit of the plant in Britain.

The hybrid between *Arum italicum* ssp. *neglectum* and *Arum maculatum* was reported at Arundel by Lovis and Prime in Stace 1975 but this site has been lost due to the construction of a car park. The overlap in the flowering periods of the two species suggests that hybrids may be more common than is supposed. No obvious or suspected hybrids were found on this survey.

Plants with leaf shape and veining intermediate between the two subspecies of *Arum italicum* are sometimes found. Of our 113 colonies of ssp. *neglectum*, nine include plants with some of the characteristics of ssp. *italicum*. especially the light veining. This character is very variable and alone is not enough to determine the subspecies. Garden throwouts of ssp. *italicum* on their own are often quite obvious, but there can be a problem with apparently mixed colonies.

Plants of *Arum italicum* ssp. *neglectum* with spotted leaves are uncommon in Sussex and provide scope for further study. Only a few colonies were noted on the Downs and only the Park Bottom, Arundel site to the south of the Downs. At the latter site approximately 20% of the plants have leaf spotting and it was noticed that on many plants the spots appear only on the third and subsequent leaves.

#### ***Arum italicum* ssp. *italicum*.**

In Sussex this plant as a garden throwout, is capable of surviving or becoming established on a variety of soils (as probably would ssp. *neglectum*) but with a preference for the chalk and gravels of the coastal plain.

**Table 1,** *Arum italicum* ssp. *italicum*, historical and current records by locality.

	Prime, Buckle & Lovis 1955	Sussex Plant Atlas & Supplement 1966-1988	This Survey 1995-98
West Sussex v.c.13	5	11	43
East Sussex v.c.14	0	2	9
Total	<u>5</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>52</u>



All Sussex records are presumed to be of garden origin and many are small colonies of one or more clumps on roadsides. Some very large colonies exist e.g. in the Wildlife Sanctuary at Worthing Crematorium on the site of Muntham House, and at Greatham, the latter, although in the wild, possibly planted.

The original Sussex record, Offington 1858 W.W.Saunders, was at Offington Hall. and Offington Lane and was probably planted by the owners who were known to be keen gardeners. Houses were built in the grounds of the Hall in 1952 and the Hall was demolished in 1963, but the plant survives in some of the gardens of the houses built on the site and at the north end of Offington Lane. Wolley-Dod believed that the stations had been lost to road widening by 1937, another example of the plant's ability to survive disturbance.

### Results of survey

Figure 1. shows the current distribution of *A. italicum* ssp. *neglectum* in West Sussex to be generally as described by Prime, Buckle & Lovis (1955), the *Sussex Plant Atlas* (1980) and the *Atlas Supplement* (1990) with stations on the north scarp of the Downs from the Hampshire border to the River Arun in the west of the county. The plant is, strangely, absent from similar habitats in the east of the county except in the Steyning area. In the east of the county the plant is found on the lower south facing ground reaching almost to the sea in some places.

Figure 2 shows the current distribution of *Arum italicum* ssp. *italicum* which occurs in both vice counties as a garden escape or throwout, with a concentration in the south-east of v.c. 13 which is similar to that for ssp. *neglectum*. Table 1 shows a steady increase in records since 1955.

### Conclusions

Generally *A. italicum* ssp. *neglectum* in Sussex is not under threat. Some roadside colonies are at risk from habitat deterioration, future road widening schemes and land development, but its habitat on or at the base of the steep tree covered slopes of the north scarp of the Downs should offer protection from building and current farming practices. The plant is capable of hanging on, in changing habitats even in urban areas, the deep tubers offering protection against all but the most drastic disturbance.

Prime discusses in detail the spread of *Arum* and concludes that this is mostly by vegetative reproduction of the tubers and that the dispersal of seed over large distances by birds is perhaps uncommon. It seems unlikely that any significant spread of the plant in Sussex will occur in the future.

*Arum italicum* ssp. *italicum* is likely to increase as more garden throwouts appear, and where these arrive in suitable habitats could become well established.

### Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the members of the Sussex Botanical Recording Society especially to Elizabeth & Nick Sturt for their winter work on the north scarp of the Downs and to David Donovan for his work in urban areas. Dr. Legg of The Booth Museum of Natural History, Brighton for access to their botanical records. The maps have been produced using Dmap.

### References

- Arnold F.H. (1907) *A Flora of Sussex*.
- Briggs M. (1990) *Sussex Plant Atlas Selected Supplement*.
- Hall P.C. (1980) *Sussex Plant Atlas*
- Prime, Buckle & Lovis (1955) *The Distribution & Ecology of Arum neglectum in Southern England Part 1. Kent, Sussex, Hants. and Dorset. Proceedings of The BSBI. Vol. 1, Part 3.*
- Prime C.T. (1960) *Lords and Ladies*.
- Rich T. et al. (1996) *Flora of Ashdown Forest*
- Wolley-Dod A.H. (1937) *Flora of Sussex*.

Ron Clough July 1998

A complete list of all current records of both subspecies showing 6 figure grid references, colony size, status, and recorder together with notes of historical records is available to interested members. A4 size SAE please.

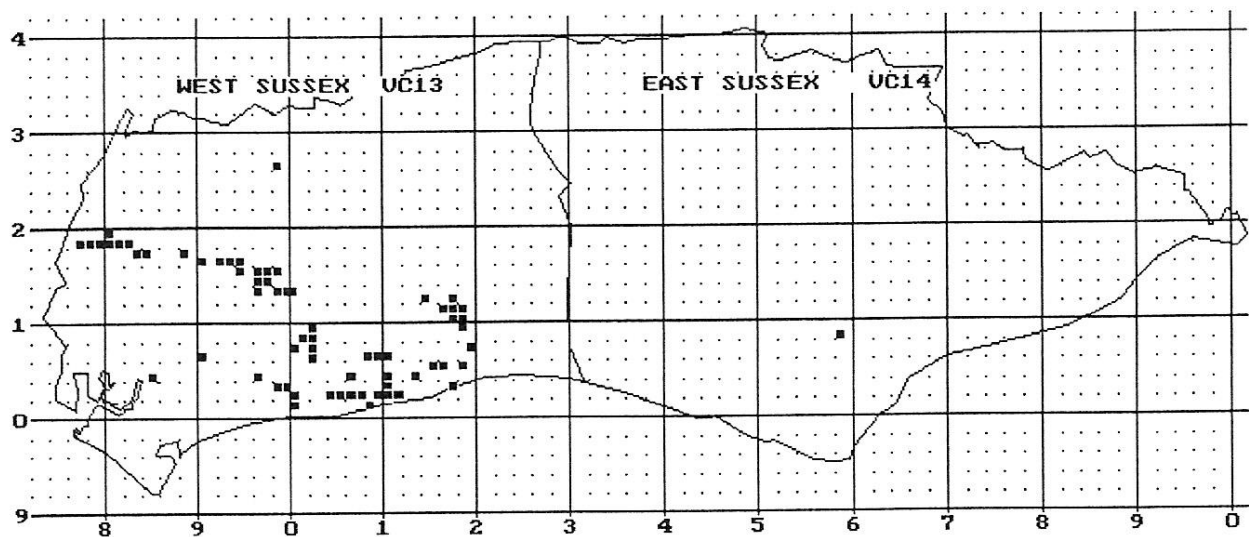


FIGURE 1 *Arum italicum ssp. neglectum* in Sussex All records 1995 - 1998 x 1km. square

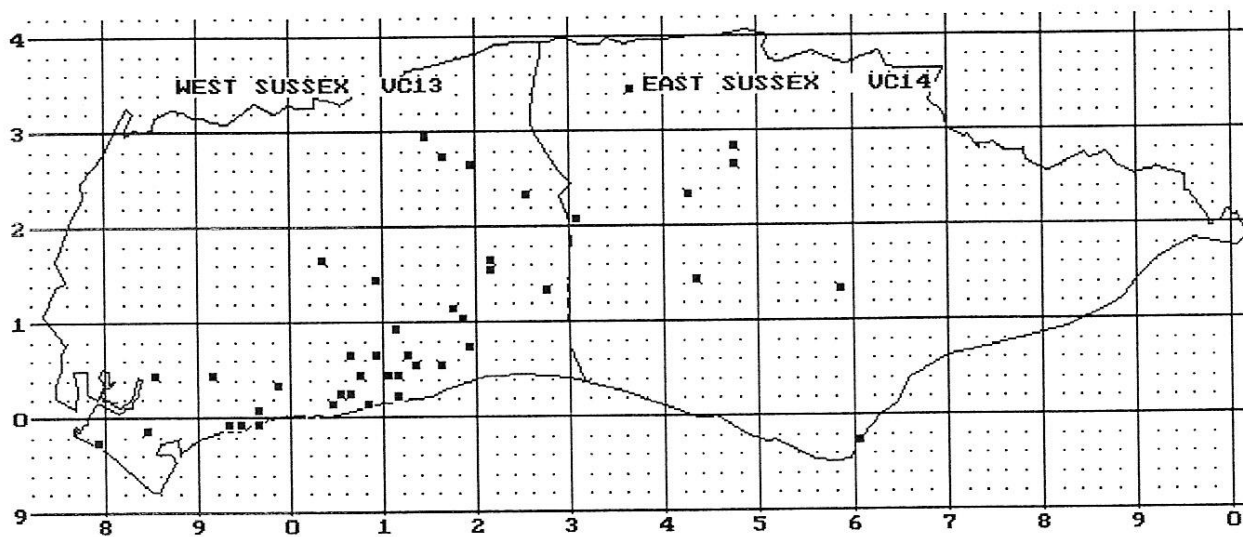


FIGURE 2 *Arum italicum ssp. italicum* in Sussex All records 1995 - 1998 x 1km. square

# SELECTED NOTABLE PLANT RECORDS 1998 - V.C.13

Species	Location	Recorder	Comments
<i>Apera spica-venti</i>	Coates	B&RC	Third field in this area
<i>Arum italicum</i> ssp. <i>italicum</i>	High Salvington	B&RC	
<i>Arum italicum</i> ssp. <i>neglectum</i>	Tarring Church	B&RC	1955 record refound
"	Balls Cross	E&NS	Most northely site - on clay outside its normal range
"	High Salvington	S&VH	Confirming old record
<i>Calamagrostis epigejos</i>	West Dean Woods	EB	
"	Wittering	E&NS	
"	The Denture, Houghton	E&NS	
<i>Carex extensa</i>	Pilsey	JW	
<i>Centaurea calcitrapa</i>	Newtimber	B&RC	c. 500 plants
"	West Hill	B&RC	c. 300 plants - new site
<i>Ceratocarpus claviculata</i>	Lavington	FR	
"	Lords Piece, Coates	SMS	1000's
"	Amberley Wild Brooks	FA/MB	Confirming old site.
<i>Chionodoxa forbesii</i>	Beeding Hill	John Patmore	
"	Shoreham	EB	Roadside verge, Mill Hill. 'A few plants' seen 1991 by Jim Hoare - now a patch 6'x2', so established and spreading. (Intro. sp.)
<i>Drosera intermedia</i>	Bog Common	FA/FPP	
<i>Euphorbia platyphyllos</i>	Shopham Bridge	RIH	
"	Littleworth	AGK	
<i>Euphrasia confusa</i>	Cissbury Ring	SBRS	Det. A.J.Silverside. 1st County record since pre-1950
<i>Gaudinia fragilis</i>	Wiston Pond area	EB	Conf. PAH. Casual. About 6 plants. 1st v.c.13 record
<i>Geum rivale</i>	Fyning Moor	SBRS	Possible hybrids with <i>G. urbanum</i> .
<i>Hypericum humifusum</i>	Coates	Mike & Olwen Hollings & others.	Beside new pond
<i>Hypochaeris glabra</i>	Watersfield	FA	
<i>Juncus subnodulosus</i>	Fishbourne Marsh	E&NS	Arnold site
"	Leythorne Farm	E&NS	
<i>Lamprothamnium papulosum</i>	Thorney Island	RCS/SBRS	1st v.c.13 record for this stonewort
<i>Legousia hybrida</i>	Heyshott	HH	In barley field
<i>Moenchia erecta</i>	Sutton Common	SMS	
<i>Ophrys insectifera</i>	Whiteways	AJG	Two sites here
<i>O. apifera</i> x <i>insectifera</i>	Fairmile Bottom	Bruce Middleton.	Conf. DCL. 2nd British record & 1st for v.c.13
<i>Orchis morio</i>	Anchor Bottom	BR & DCL.	c. 6000. Not reported from here before !
<i>Ornithogalum pyrenaicum</i>	Fishbourne	RCS.	15 plants were refound on the site from which the species was moved 9 yrs. ago, although this site has now been beset by roadworks. The designated verge (the new site) was mown this year.



Species	Location	Recorder	Comments
Platanthera bifolia	Woolhouse Fm, Stedham	FA	
Poa infirma	Kingston	PAH	'Many plants E of lighthouse'. 1st Sussex record.
Potamogeton alpinus	South Stoke	Nick Stewart.	1st Sussex record since 1950. 1 plant
Potentilla argentea	Hoyle Farm	E&NS	Plentiful in field
Radiola linoides	Heyshott Common	E&NS	c. 3000 plants
"	Slaugham	SBRS	Abundant on rides
Ranunculus trichophyllus	Storrington	CMPR	In small pond
Scleranthus annuus	Watersfield	SBRS	
"	Coates Common	SMS	
Thelypteris palustris	Rackham	FA	Recorded by the Haywards 1975
Trifolium ornithopodioides	Worthing	ROF	
"	Kingston	B&RC	By lighthouse
T. stellatum	Shoreham	EJC	'Plenty' this year.
T. subterraneum	West Chiltington	FA	
"	Coates	B&RC	
"	Pulborough	MB	Lawn below MB's flat !
T. suffocatum	The Green, Littlehampton	AGK/PAH	Abundant
Umbilicus rupestris	Chichester	DMD	On old flint wall in grounds of Prebendary School
"	Tarring Church	B&RC	
Viola palustris	Rackham	FA	Old site refound
Wahlenbergia hederacea	Ambersham	HE/FR	Introduced from Devon according to Guermonprez 1909.
Wolffia arrhiza	North Stoke	Mike & Olwen Hollings/FA.	Locally common.

Compiled by Mary Briggs

Mary adds; 'Many thanks to all our recorders, for these and also for the many other useful and interesting records from all'.

#### Recorders initials

AGH	Arthur Hoare	E&NS	Elizabeth & Nick Sturt	PAH	Paul Harnes
AGK	Alan Knapp	FA	Frances Abraham	PGM	Pam Marchant
AJK	Ann Griffiths	FMS	Frances Smith	PJR	Peter Russell
AS	Tony Spiers	FPP	Frank Penfold	PKV	Pat Verrall
BR	Brian Ratcliffe	FR	Francis Rose	RCS	Rod Stern
B&RC	Beryl & Ron Clough	HE	Hilary Englefield	RIH	Rita Hemsley
CMPR	Kate Ryland	HH	Hilda Horder	ROF	Renee Folkard
DCL	David Lang	HMP	Helen Proctor	SBRS	Sussex Botanical Recording Society
DLV	Dennis Vinall	JPD	Peter Davys	SMS	Sylvia Simkin
DMD	David Donovan	JS	Janet Symes		
EB	Betty Bishop	JW	Judy Wilson		
EJC	Jean Clunes	MB	Mary Briggs		

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**SELECTED NOTABLE PLANT RECORDS 1998 - v.c.14**


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<b>Species</b>	<b>Tetrad</b>	<b>Recorder</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<i>Agrostemma githago</i>	30N	R.Lord	det. PAH
<i>Anagallis minima</i>	81S	PGM	
<i>Anisantha tectorum</i>	30M	AS	
<i>Apera spica-venti</i>	30H	AS	
<i>Bromus secalinus</i>	30M	PAH	
<i>Carex acuta</i>	62N	PJR	det. A.O.Chater
<i>Ceterach officinalis</i>	TV69D	DLV	
<i>Dactylorhiza praetermissa</i>	50M	A. Murray	
<i>Doronicum plantagineum</i>	50L	JPD	
<i>Dracunculus vulgaris</i>	40P	DCL	
<i>Epipactis purpurata</i>	50Q	RIH	
<i>Filago vulgaris</i>	33H	RCS	
<i>Galium palustre</i> ssp. <i>elongata</i>	50R	SBRS	det. AGK
<i>Gaudinia fragilis</i>	51K	CMPR	det. PAH
<i>Groenlandia densa</i>	50E	FMS	
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	41N	AGK	
<i>Macleaya x kewensis</i>	92F	PKV	1st v.c. record
<i>Ophrys sphegodes</i>	30S	G. Sutton	
<i>Orobanche minor</i> var <i>maritima</i>	30L	PAH	det. Dr. F.Rumsey. 1st v.c. record
<i>O. rapum-genistae</i>	50U	DLV	
<i>Petasites hybridus</i>	40T	JS	
<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>	30H	AS	1st v.c. record
<i>Ranunculus circinatus</i>	41F	EB	
<i>R. tripartitus</i>	50U	N. Stewart	
<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	50C	FMS	
<i>Seseli libanotis</i>	TV89S	DCL	New site
<i>Sium latifolium</i>	81X	HMP	det. PAH
<i>Spiraea douglasii</i> ssp. <i>douglasii</i>	43H	AGH	
<i>Ulmus coritana</i>	50A	JPD	1st v.c. record

Compiled by Paul Harnes

## Sussex Road Verges and other Linear Habitats by Ann Griffiths WSCC.

From the early 1970's the Sussex Botanical Recording Society have been involved in raising the profile of the significance of the road verge habitat as an important nature conservation resource. Mary Briggs personally visited the various County Surveyors Depots, and as a result, the Notable Road Verge Scheme was formed.

The process of Biodiversity Action Planning now presents a new opportunity for the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan for both East and West Sussex Road Verges. The 'Notable Road Verge' scheme allowed those sites that had been designated as 'Notable Verges' to receive the appropriate management required. However, the conservation interest goes beyond these notable verges. By looking at the wider issue of biodiversity, it is hoped that an action plan can be drawn up covering the whole of the verge resource.

The involvement and views of the SBRS in this process are essential. Whilst it is important that the 'Notable Verges' are recognised, it would be unmanageable to have a large number of such verges. It would be more desirable to have an overall management regime that catered for the interest of the majority of the verges.

Your views are invited on the following:

- do you have ideas on what criteria should apply to notable verges ( e.g. contains a protected species, a species of Sussex importance, or has a broad assemblage of plants of importance etc.)
- what would be the ideal management for verges overall ? - it must however be remembered that safety MUST take priority.
- do you know of any important verges that should be looked at in greater detail ? - we are not suggesting you go out and start recording on all your local road verges, as again there are safety implications that must be considered. Instead, if you know of any sites, which you think should be included in the scheme, please let me know.
- should other linear habitats be included.

Any comments please! - this process is happening throughout Sussex and the contacts are:-

**West Sussex**  
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West Sussex County  
Planning Dept.  
County Hall Chichester  
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01243 756852

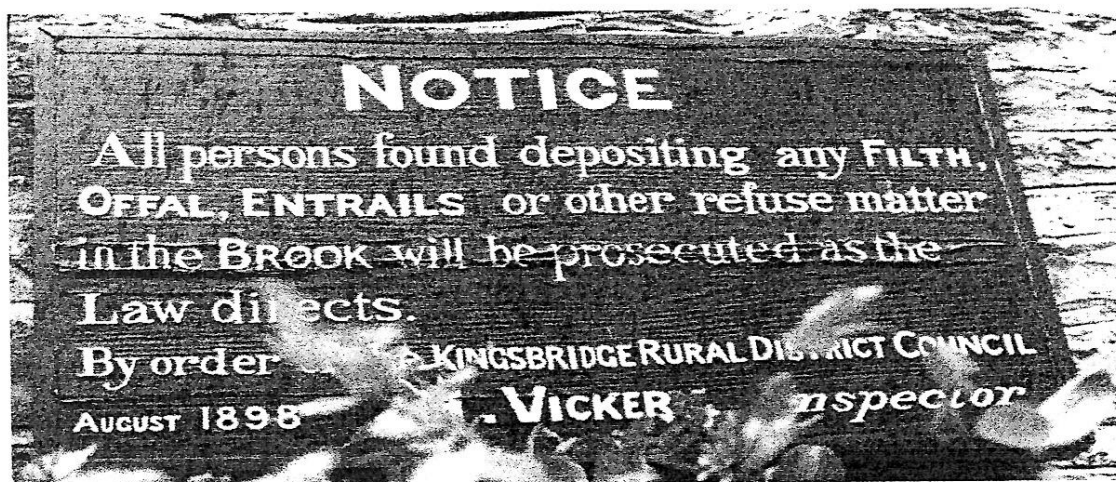
**East Sussex**  
Alex Tait  
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**Brighton & Hove**  
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Environmental Services  
Town Hall, Norton Road  
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BN3 3BQ  
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## Pollution 100 years ago

(The brook provided the water supply to several cottages in the hamlet)



Photographed by Ron Clough in Devon last year

## **Elms of Sussex - A Personal View by Peter Davys (Formerly Dutch Elm Disease Control Officer with ESCC)**

We in Sussex are lucky in having a control zone for elms, to protect them from Dutch Elm Disease, which helps to explain why we have nearly 100 species, sub-species etc. I have only mentioned those that I consider native, and write about the areas I know.

Our native elms are a very resilient group of trees with an Achilles heel in the form of D.E.D. They can grow on thin soils on chalk, can withstand salt from the sea, and are very drought resistant, but they do not like acid soils.

At Crawley we had the largest girthed broad-leaved tree recorded in the country at 50 feet, until 1935 when it had to be removed. This was only beaten by the Scottish Fortingall yew of 52 feet in the eighteenth century.

In about 1972 Dutch Elm Disease reached Sussex and started to kill our trees, especially the English elm, which the beetle that carries the disease prefers to feed on. In view of the large population of elms in Brighton, Hove and Eastbourne (and for other reasons) the local authorities together with East Sussex County Council, decided to introduce a control zone, which has been a great success up until now.

I shall restrict my observations to those species that I consider native to the area. Some may have originally been introduced, but British sourced. Most sucker quite profusely, although Wych elm does not appear to do so.

English elm is now arguably growing in greater numbers than before D.E.D. in the control zone in rural areas, due to its great capacity to sucker. Disease is dealt with promptly when noticed. One tree in Preston Park in Brighton is 21 feet in girth, and another there is 98 feet tall, and these are the largest in the country. Outside the control zone the species is still suffering pretty badly from D.E.D. and all the big trees I knew of have died.

Wych elm reproduces by seed and is found throughout the county to the best of my knowledge. It seems to be more tolerant of different soils, even growing on Ashdown Forest with its acid soils, although it is quite scarce there.

The Huntingdon elm is a hybrid between Wych and Small-leaved. All the trees are planted, but as the parents are native I include it. It is a lovely tree of beautiful proportions possessing a large smoothish leaf. It was planted as a street tree in Eastbourne and Hove in particular. One tree in Hailsham is 15 feet in girth and is the largest in the country. It does not set seed, but occasionally suckers.

Dutch elm is also a hybrid similar to the above, but it has corky twigs and suckers readily. It is found mainly at the eastern end of the South Downs, especially around Polegate. There is a nice tree in school grounds in Seaford. Glynde Place used to have big Dutch elms, and still has suckers.

The Small-leaved elm occurs, I am sure naturally, by Pevensey Levels and around Hailsham. The leaves vary and care is needed in identifying them - they can even vary greatly on an individual tree.

The Jersey elm was planted as a street tree in coastal towns and a few others, but only Brighton, Hove and Eastbourne have any sizeable populations left. It forms a lovely conical shape. There is a nice row of them in Preston Park. Where it can sucker it will do so, as at Polegate and Jevington in particular.

The Cornish elm was undoubtedly introduced many years ago, especially in Firle Park on Lord Gage's Estate, although all the big trees were killed by the onset of D.E.D. However, it does produce suckers and, where animals cannot browse them, it is reproducing. There is a big tree in Polegate, which is threatened by the proposed new by-pass, and there are several in Brighton and Eastbourne.

The Coritanian elm I have included because of the fact that it appears so scrubby and natural looking, growing at the bottom of High and Over near Seaford on both sides of the road. The leaves are like English elm, but smoother, and the tree is not so erect. I am sure that more of this sub-species could be found by diligent observers.

## ***SORBUS TORMINALIS***

Pat Donovan sends us this interesting cutting from *The Guardian* of 2nd December 1998.

How many Sussex Pubs are called The Chequers - and which of these has a *Sorbus torminalis* tree nearby ?

Frank Penfold and Frances Abraham can report a Wild Service-tree at The Chequers at Rowhook . . . .

### **A Country Diary**

KENT: It's close on twenty years since I last saw the wild service tree at the Chequers inn in Smarden. But it is still there, wedged between the back of the pub and the car park. Its crimson-tinged, maple-like leaves were almost all fallen, but it didn't look a day older. Yet its humble appearance belies the fact that this is one of the scarcest and most fascinating of English native trees. Also the fact that in the Kent and Sussex Weald (one of the species heartlands) it's known as the chequer tree - which seems too much of a coincidence for a tree growing in a pub called The Chequers.

The secret of the tree's charisma lies in its berries, bunches of brown fruits that, once they've been softened by frost, are edible

and have a taste quite unlike any other British wild fruit, a combination of sultana, tamarind and prune.

In prehistoric times, when the tree was much commoner, they must have been one of the few sources of sugariness in the wild. And up until the Great War they were still gathered and sold in the Weald like a kind of sweetmeat, being customarily bound up in strings and hung above the hearth to be picked off and munched one by one.

They were also made into various kinds of drink - hence the Chequers connection. It wasn't a beer in the strict sense but probably a liqueur something like sloe gin, or a fermented wine. Smarden has its own house recipe.

RICHARD MABEY

*The Guardian*

### **Newsletter Note**

As you can see from page 11 we can include photographs in the Newsletter.

Not all photographs will be suitable for reproduction. They must be of the highest quality with good contrast, and even then lose much in the photocopying process - but the possibility is there for photos relevant to Sussex recording etc.

All submissions initially please, to Frances Abraham.

Ron Clough



## URSULA SMITH - An Obituary

Dr. Ursula Smith died in March this year. Eileen Howard sends us this appreciation of her life.

Dr. Ursula Smith B.Sc., Ph.D., C. Biol., M.I.Biol., FLS., was not only a highly qualified botanist, but had other varied interests, and above all was a helpful friend and colleague. She was a member of a number of biological societies, including Brighton and Hove Natural History Society and the Sussex Wildlife Trust. She served on the Council of the Trust for twelve years, and was chairman of the Brighton Group from 1983 - 95.

Most of her working life was spent in education, with particular interests in ecology and the historical origin of wild plants. During World War II she taught in a school in Lewes. Later, for many years, she was a lecturer at Brighton Technical College, preparing students for External London University science degrees and Institute of Biology graduate examinations. We had many and varied ecological trips together, mostly in Sussex, associated with courses at the Brighton Technical College and the SBRS. Together we also attended many meetings of the British Ecological Society.

Ursula long had an interest in the history of wild plants. In her middle years she became a Doctor

of Philosophy with a thesis involving the distribution of Field Fleawort *Tephrosia integrifolia* in relation to Iron Age archaeological sites. Thus I was encouraged to work for a research degree at a similar age. She also gave lectures at the Friends Centre in Brighton on wild plants and history.

After retirement Ursula embarked on *A History of Sussex Wild Plants*, of which I was more than pleased to be her co-author. Unfortunately by the time this was published she was not really well enough to fully appreciate the acclaim she so rightly deserved.

Amongst her other interests were the Girl Guides, and she was President of the Patcham District Company and District Commissioner for the Preston area of Brighton. She spent some eighteen months in Kenya, at the invitation of Lord and Lady Baden-Powell, to help set up Girl Guides in that country. Another interest was cricket. She was able to attend matches at Sussex County Cricket Club Ground in Hove, and watched games avidly on TV.

Altogether she was an interesting and delightful person, who will be sadly missed.

Eileen Howard

### SBRS Officers

President	Mrs. M. Briggs, 9
Chairman	Mr. R.C. Stern, 1
Hon. Treasurer	Mr. T. Lording, 17
Hon Secretary	Mrs. R. Hemsley, 5

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East Sussex	Mr. P. A. Harnes, 2
	Mr. A. G. Hoare, 2
West Sussex	Mrs. M. Briggs, 5
	Dr. A. G. Knapp, 7

### Field Meeting Conveners

East Sussex	Mrs. P. M. Donovan, 30
West Sussex	Miss F. Abraham, 1

Newsletter Editor	Miss F. Abraham, 1
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### Committee Members

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Mr. R. I. Clough, 20	Brighton, BN1 1